

JVA awards local firm irrigation project contract

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) has awarded a contract to a local firm for carrying out an underground water-draining network required for the Ghor Al-Safi irrigation project, and for setting up an earthen dam to stop the seepage of flood waters from the Ghor Al-Safi project. The cost of the project is estimated at JD 307,000.

Under the contract the local firm will provide a 55-kilometre network of pipes for the project to drain underground water; this will assist in reducing the soil from saline residues that harm the land. The porous pipes take down the water to the lower layers of the soil, under 6,000 dunums where

an agricultural project is now being carried out by the JVA.

The project is to be carried out in 300 days, according to Dr. Mohammad Bani Hani, JVA's secretary general who signed the contract with the firm's general manager.

Dr. Bani Hani said that the irrigation project for Ghor Al-Safi in the southern Jordan Valley region will eventually extend to 27,000 dunums. It is one of the largest agricultural projects being implemented by the JVA along the eastern side of the Dead Sea from Ghor Mazraa in the north to Ghor Khazra in the south.

Dr. Bani Hani said that the JVA will at a later stage set up similar networks in areas which suffer from high salinity in the soil.

Jordanian industrial products to go on display in Muscat

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian Trade Centres Corporation has announced that it will organise a Jordanian industrial and trade exhibition in Muscat, the capital of Oman, in the second half of the coming month.

A corporation spokesman said that Jordanian businessmen and industrialists wishing to take part in the exhibition are requested to register their names and the products they wish to display at the exhibit. He added that the corporation will later announce further details about the event.

He said that the exhibition is in implementation of an Oman-Jordanian trade agreement signed in February 1986.

The corporation organised exhibitions of Jordanian products in Tunis and Baghdad during 1986.

AAC made substantial profit despite troubles of carriers in region

AMMAN (Petra) — Arab Air Cargo (AAC) made a profit of JD 90,000 during its 1986 operations, despite losses for other airlines in the region, according to Mr. Ismail Khalil, AAC director general.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Mr. Khalil said that AAC plans to charter an additional aircraft in the coming year in order to meet the growing demand on air transport. In line with the requirements of the International Civil Aviation Association regulations AAC will modernise its fleet.

He said that AAC will get rid of its Boeing 707s because European airports plan to ban them from landing by the middle of the coming year due to their noise.

The total flights made by the AAC in the past year numbered 487, a total of 3,260 flying hours, transporting a total of 18,506 tonnes of food supplies, Mr. Khalil

pointed out.

Most of the operation were in Arab countries and the flights served the economic interests of both Iraq and Jordan, which jointly own the venture, Mr. Khalil pointed out.

He said that AAC remains open to all other Arab airlines which would like to acquire shares in it, because, he said, AAC aims at serving pan-Arab interests.

Referring to the future, Mr. Khalil said that he expected AAC to witness further growth in the coming year at the rate of at least 10 per cent, largely due to the wide support the company continues to get from the Jordanian and Iraqi governments. He said that despite the prevailing difficult economic conditions, the AAC plans to seek new markets outside its traditional field of operations.

Vocational trainees complete four-day term examinations

AMMAN (J.T.) — Students in the third secondary stage of the vocational training colleges and centres in Jordan Tuesday completed the first term of examination for the current

1986/87 scholastic year. Some 6,551 trainees of both sexes took the four-day examinations in the following areas: industry, commerce, agriculture, postal, nursing, and hotel management.

Symposium on development plan to be held

AMMAN (Petra) — A symposium on the impact of implementing the 1986-1990 Five Year National Development Plan on the population of Jordan will open at the University of Jordan on Sunday. The three-day symposium, organised by the University of Jordan in cooperation with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, will discuss 10 working papers dealing with plan's effects on the population, according to Dr. Fawzi Sahawneh, professor at the university's faculty of art and head of a committee preparing the symposium.

He said that the participants will discuss five working papers on the first day, dealing with a general framework of the plan, its economic policies, health and educational projects, and their effects on the people. The second day will be dedicated to the discussion of four working papers that deal with the effect of the plan in increasing national income and promoting social standards of people, Dr. Sahawneh added.

He said on the third day the participants will discuss a development programme for the occupied Arab territories and the effect of that plan on employment prospects. Dr. Sahawneh called on all those interested in the five-year plan for both banks to attend the symposium.

Delegation to attend transport meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Transport Ahmad Dakqan is due to leave for Baghdad on Saturday at the head of a delegation to attend the board meetings and general assembly of the Iraq-Jordan Land Transport Company, due to open on Sunday. The meeting will discuss a report on the administrative and financial operations of the company, a plan for the future, as well as a general budget for 1987.

ARA discusses tourism, fishing with South Sinai

AOABA (Petra) — President of Aqaba Region Authority (ARA) Basam Al-Kakish recently discussed with Governor of Southern Sinai Mohammed Affi, and his accompanying delegation, prospects for reviving tourist movement between the Aqaba region and South Sinai region.

During a meeting held at ARA premises, Mr. Al-Kakish and Mr. Affi also discussed the possibility of organising collective tourist trips to the Egyptian Island of Farouk without the need for producing Jordanian passports.

Mr. Affi, and the accompanying Egyptian delegation, also met with Aqaba District Governor Khalil Khreisat, and discussed with him possible cooperation between the South Sinai governorate and Aqaba region. They also reviewed the possibility of allowing Jordanian fishermen to fish in the neighbouring Egyptian waters.

The delegation then visited Aqaba municipality where Mr. Affi was presented with the city's shield, and then toured Haya Al Hussein Hospital.

Jordan to celebrate Arbor Day with afforestation plan

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan will celebrate Arbor Day on Jan. 15; the main celebration will be held under royal patronage near the Queen Alia International Airport, where a total of 5,000 olive and 2,000 palm tree saplings will be planted, in addition to at least 2,000 cypress trees, Mr. Ghaleb Abu Arrabi, director of the range and afforestation department at the Ministry of Agriculture announced Tuesday.

these trees is expected to be 90 per cent successful, up from 50 per cent in the previous season.

Mr. Abu Arrabi called on the Jordanian farmers to start planting fruit trees from now until the end of February, due to the presence of sufficient amounts of water in the soil at present.

Referring to the forest wealth in Jordan, Mr. Abu Arrabi said that a total of 574,000 dunums of Jordanian land are covered with forest trees and the wood of these trees is worth at least JD 32 million. The total area of land planted with fruit trees was 554,291 dunums last year, but more fruit trees have been grown on the higher lands; mostly olives and grapes within a Ministry of Agriculture project designed to be extended over 300,000 dunums, Mr. Abu Arrabi added.

He said that the Ministry of Agriculture now possesses 12 nurseries that can produce an average of seven million saplings a year, but the private sector owns 60 nurseries that can produce 600,000 saplings a year.

Belgium to grant Jordan JD 2.5 million loan for spa complex at Ma'in springs

AMMAN (J.T.) — Belgium is to grant Jordan a JD 2.5 million loan to help finance a complex being built at Zarqa Ma'in mineral springs south of Madaba, under an agreement signed recently in Amman.

According to plan, the project entails building a 100 room hotel, a camping area, offices, recreational baths, picnic sites, and public swimming pools.

The main purpose of the project is to create a comprehensive and integrated spa complex and tourist spot with sufficiently wide variety of facilities to ensure a reasonable degree of self sufficiency and to

satisfy the needs of different income-level visitors.

The project was estimated to have an overall cost of JD 13 million, of which JD 7 million were raised through the floating of bonds and from the Belgian loan.

The loan agreement was signed by Minister of Planning Taher Kanaan and a representative of the Belgian government.

AMPCO to expand facilities, promote exports

By a Jordan Times staff reporter

AMMAN — The Agricultural Marketing and Processing Company (AMPCO) of Jordan has set a target of between JD 15 million and JD 20 million as the total volume of Jordanian agricultural produce for the year 1987 and also plans to expand its activities by setting up several new plants to facilitate the processing and movement of produce from the Kingdom.

Ghazi Abu Hassan, chairman and general manager of the company, said the major commodities included in the export programme would be fresh fruit and vegetables such as citrus, tomatoes, eggplants, beans, sweet pepper and squash and some specially-grown produce such as French beans, seedless grapes, red and yellow sweet pepper, netted melons and celeries.

For the first time since its inception, the AMPCO sent four consignments of produce, including eggplants, beans, sweet pepper and squash as well as citrus, to Britain this month. The fourth consignment was shipped from Aqaba on Tuesday, Mr. Abu Hassan said. The total volume of the four shipments was 30,000 tonnes.

In addition, the company sent 32,000 tonnes of produce to Kuwait this year. However, "our major market remains to be Syria, where we send tomatoes — processed as well as unprocessed — in bulk quantities," Mr. Abu Hassan said.

The total volume of tomatoes sent to Syria this year was 20,000 tonnes, he said, in addition to 3,000 tonnes each of lemon and squash and 5,000 tonnes of



Ghazi Abu Hassan

eggplants. The company's dealings with Syria are covered by a barter agreement under which Syria supplies Jordan with potatoes, onion and garlic.

The first AMPCO shipment of a combination of fruits and vegetables to West Germany is scheduled to be sent on Jan. 6, Mr. Abu Hassan said. He added that the company was negotiating with France, Belgium, Holland and Poland on similar deals under which the importing countries would supply an equal volume of apples to Jordan. It is expected that the total quantity of these exports will be 24,000 tonnes, he said.

The company finds good market for tomato paste and crushed tomatoes in Egypt and Iraq, he added. Asked whether the company's purchases of tomatoes from farmers were in any way related to the current shortage of tomatoes in the local market, Mr. Abu Hassan explained that "the current situation is a question of supply

and demand. We do not buy tomatoes for export when the local demand for the product is high... in fact, we do not buy any produce from the farmers when the prices are on the higher side... We step in when prices are low and help the farmers realise a good price."

"The company is the Jordanian government's arm to help the farmers by offering them good prices and finding good outlets for products in abundance in the country," said AMPCO chairman. "We are not a profit-oriented organisation. If we make a profit, well and good. Our main aim — in line with the concept behind the establishment of the company — is to break even while maintaining a steady flow of help to our farmers."

The company was converted into a government-owned establishment in September this year. Now, the government holds 70 per cent of the total shares of the JD 10 million company while the Pension Fund and the Social Security Corporation own 12.5 per cent each and the agricultural credit corporation holds five per cent.

At present, the company operates tomato paste and crushing plants, and canning and wooden packing facilities, as well as a plant to produce metal containers for oil, cheese etc. in addition to a number of grading/sorting/packing centres in various parts of the Kingdom. The plants are located in the Jordan Valley — north and south Shumeh and Ghor Safi — and Marka.

The company employs between 300 and 800 people depending upon the seasonal demand for manpower.

Projects under consideration by

the company include plants to extract orange juice, a facility to freeze vegetables and fruits, a canning factory, grading/sorting/packing centres in some remote regions, and a refrigerated warehouse with a capacity to hold 15,000 tonnes of potatoes and onions.

"We are also contemplating over a proposal to set up a plant to make tomato ketchup and vegetables soups," Mr. Abu Hassan said.

Answering further questions, the AMPCO chairman said: "Jordan is currently negotiating with the European Community to review an existing agreement under which agricultural products from the Kingdom are exempted from paying customs duties or other charged while being exported to EC member states during the first five months of every year."

"The produce that Jordan offers during the first five months of every year are not usually grown in Europe in the same period because of weather conditions," said Mr. Abu Hassan. "Jordan is now trying to extend the duration of the agreement so as to cover a larger period."

"The company is encouraging local farmers to grow products which are not usually grown here in large quantities. These include seedless grapes, red and yellow sweet pepper, netted melons and celeries. These products will be grown with the sole purpose of marketing them in Europe," Mr. Abu Hassan said.

Jordan is facing competition from several other countries including Portugal, Spain and Turkey but "that is something we have to live with."

'Camps war' drags on

(Continued from page 1)

Implement these resolutions and the Arab League would meet again on Jan. 14 to review the results of its mission, the communiqué said.

The special committee is made up of Jordan, Tunisia, Algeria, Kuwait, Mauritania, North Yemen and Mr. Klibi.

It was given the mission of implementing the earlier resolution calling for an "immediate and global" ceasefire in the camps in Beirut and South Lebanon, the lifting of the siege, the re-supply of the wounded, the return of people driven from their homes and the release of prisoners.

Delegation sources told AP Saudi Arabia declined to take part in the special committee, noting that it already was taking its own diplomatic steps to achieve a halt in the fighting. Libya also declined to take part.

At a date yet to be fixed, the special committee will go to Damascus to ask the Syrian leadership to intervene with the Amal militia involved in the fighting.

Several ceasefires mediated by Syrian, Iranian and Libyan officials have failed to halt the savage battles for control of Palestinian refugee settlements.

PLO leader Yasser Arafat says Syria is trying to drive Palestinians from Lebanon, while Damascus and Amal say Mr. Arafat is trying to expand his military power in the country.

In Baghdad, a PLO spokesman said Syrian forces were responsible for what he called a massacre in the northern city of Tybri last week.

Police and Tripoli residents denied reports that hundreds of people were killed in three days of fighting between Syrian troops and members of the Tawheed militia.

Lebanese media said about 30 people died in the battles.

Syria, which has about 25,000 troops in Lebanon, first sent military units into Tripoli in September last year after its militia allies fought the fundamentalist Tawheed in the streets.

In Washington, the United States on Monday expressed concern at the continuing violence in Lebanon and said only the Lebanese government could guarantee the security of Lebanese and Palestinian civilians.

"There is no convincing argument for the presence of any other armed force,"

spokeswoman Phyllis Oakley said in a statement.

"The United States views with intense concern the continuing violence in Lebanon," Oakley said.

She said the past 11 years of civil war had made clear that no faction, Lebanese or Palestinian, could assure the safety of civilians by force.

"Rather, the presence of armed elements has virtually guaranteed that civilians will continue to be victimised, either by the enemies of their alleged protectors, or by the protectors themselves."

She said the United States called on all parties to permit international humanitarian organisations access to the Palestinian camps and other areas where their assistance was urgently needed.

Iraq to keep up pressure

(Continued from page 1)

attacking residential areas. A military spokesman said Monday that Iranian claims of civilian deaths "were to justify the daily shelling of Iraqi residential areas."

A group of Palestinians threw the bomb at a passing bus in the occupied West Bank village of Beit Sahur, the sources told AP.

Soldiers travelling in the bus opened fire on the group and then chased the attackers, calling on them to stop. When the attackers failed to halt, the soldiers opened fire, wounding one, the sources said.

In another development, the Israeli authorities banned distribution of a Palestinian newspaper in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip for two weeks because it violated

censorship laws.

The newspaper, Al Fajr, failed to submit an interview with PLO leader Yasser Arafat to the censor, said a spokesman Elisse Shazar.

Al Fajr editor Hanna Simora told the AP Israel maintained double standards — "a fully democratic one for the Hebrew press and one regulated by the censor for Palestinians."

"We should be allowed to express our views," said Mr. Simora.

Meanwhile, an Israeli court judge sentenced a U.S.-born member of a Jewish terrorist underground Tuesday to two and a half years in prison.

Ira Rappaport, formerly of New York, was convicted on Dec. 10 for belonging to a Jewish underground group.

Rappaport was charged with aggravated assault for attaching a booby-trapped bomb to the car of the former mayor of Nablus.

Israeli army may change policy

(Continued from page 1)

killing. Samer Makhram and two brothers, Omar and Hamza Zaid, all in their early 20s and residents of the town of Jenin, were convicted of killing Elihu Amedi.

A Palestinian was shot by Israeli soldiers after he allegedly threw a bottle bomb Monday at a bus near Bethlehem, Israeli sources said.

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Arafat said to have offered talks

(Continued from page 1)

"the opportunity has slipped away since Peres left office." Likud leader Yitzhak Shamir is now prime minister.

Aides to Mr. Peres, now foreign minister, told Reuters they did not recall any specific direct offer of talks. Middlemen may have been trying to test the water, they said.

Mr. Darawsh declined to identify the PLO representatives who made the offer. He said they told him Mr. Arafat was ready to send delegates to meet Israeli representatives anywhere in the world.

"They said Arafat was ready to keep the talks secret or to hold

them in public at Israeli's discretion," he added.

Mr. Darawsh said: "There can be no peace in the area without representatives of the Palestinians. Everyone says so, starting with Egypt and Jordan."

PLO representatives have increasingly held open talks with Israeli leftwingers, including Jewish and Arab parliamentarians, in past years but there have been no known meetings with government representatives.

Although Israel rejects contacts with the PLO, several ministers say they favour talks if they advanced chances for peace.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

FROM TOYOTA

Ismael Bilbeisi & Co.

Jordan Times

Official gazette published in Jordan by the Ministry of Information
Established 1977

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
AMMOUD AL KAYED

General Editor and Director General:
ABDULLAH AMAD

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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

Push for democracy

OTHER than taking the important step of passing the 1987 budget draft law, the Lower House of Parliament yesterday gave a shining example of how the executive and legislative branches of government can work hand in hand to enhance our democratic life and values. Tuesday, Dec. 23, 1986, will go down in the history of Jordan as the day in which our experience in nation-building and in strengthening our political institutions took a big step forward.

It is true that the budget draft law was passed unchanged and as presented by the government, but this does not in any way diminish the importance and the liveliness of the debate that took place on the floor of Parliament. Apart from a small hitch that prevented one deputy from finishing his address to the House, each and every one of those deputies who spoke gave his opinions in a free and positive atmosphere that contributed greatly to the success of the debate. This is indeed a big gain for parliamentary life in the country, and it is another proof that our political institutions can and do grow in strength and stature when we are willing to try and test them.

In their contributions to the budget debate, deputies moved from outright criticism to full endorsement of government policies. This the prime minister took well, however, and whether he agreed or disagreed with them, he was always willing to reply to them and did so in a democratic and positive manner. Our people, who have been following the debate on the budget with a great deal of attention and interest ever since it was announced earlier this month, will no doubt look at yesterday's Parliament session as a healthy development that deserves every support and encouragement. They will take comfort and be impressed to hear and watch and feel that the formulation and implementation of Jordan's policies are the product of a continuing dialogue between their representatives and the government.

In halting democratic practices and responsible actions in this country, we do not mean to say that our political institutions are perfect, and as such we do not need to develop them. There is a way to go yet before we can boast of fully developed institutions. But what is important here is that we are trying and that progress is being made all the time and on all fronts.

ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i: Defending the Arab Nation

KING Hussein has warned against the danger resulting from the U.S. arms deal with Iran and described the deal as impossible to understand. In an interview with the Washington Post newspaper, the King warned against an escalation of the Iran-Iraq war which could result from such deals. Perhaps the King made this critical statement in view of the current situation in the region and at a time when the United States continues to brag about its keenness on maintaining security in the Gulf and about the need for settling international disputes by peaceful means. Being a major world power involved in such deals with the Iranian aggressors is something unbecoming, and the deal reflects the impression that the United States is intentionally trying to step up the war activity in the Gulf to undermine peace and stability in that region. The United States is a superpower and has serious responsibilities towards the establishment of peace and security around the world, but its arms deal with Iran which continues its aggression on Iraq is clearly contradictory with such status, and reflects Washington's intention to see more victims and more material losses in the Gulf region. The U.S. arms deal reflects total contradiction between what Washington claims it seeks to achieve and what it really is doing. King Hussein has warned against an escalation of the Gulf conflict because he realises the devastating consequences on the Arabs and the Muslim Nation. If the war is expanded no one will escape the danger, and no one including the United States will be safe from its negative results. As for Jordan, it will no doubt continue to support Iraq in the war, because it realises that the Iranian enemy is aiming at occupying Arab land. Any help to Iraq is a form of defence for the Arab Nation.

Al Dustour: Hopes for ending bloodshed

THE Arab foreign ministers meeting in Tunis has revived hopes among Arab masses who believe that the ministers will work out a formula for ending the camps war in Lebanon. If the ministers succeed in their mission, then the aggressive onslaught on the refugee camps will stop. What had encouraged the Amal militia to pursue its bombardments of the camps was the indifferent attitude on the part of the Arab states; and what caused so much bloodshed and destruction so far was the total absence of concerted Arab action to find effective means for settling the issue. The Amal militia has continued its indiscriminate shelling of camps determined to kill innocent people and liquidate their presence. But we now attach hopes to the meeting in Tunis where the Arab ministers are bound to discuss the subject in detail, and we are encouraged by the fact that more Arab delegates than was originally expected are now taking part in the meeting. This development reflects the impression that Arab states have become more and more concerned about the situation and are determined to end the tragedy. We hope that the Arab foreign ministers will rise above differences that plague their countries and seriously consider plans for ending the bloodshed. Mere condemnation of the fighting in the camps can never solve the problem and what is needed now is serious action to put a final end to all aggression on the refugees and thwart all plans by Israel and its agents to liquidate the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

Sawt Al Shaab: Hopes for ending 'camps war'

THE camps war is now threatening to expand and to engulf new regions in Lebanon, but all the eyes are turned to Tunis, where the Arab foreign ministers are meeting in a bid to find a formula to end the conflict. These ministers ought to work seriously to end the conflict among Arabs so that they can be free to tackle an aggression by external forces on the Arab Nation. These ministers who failed in their last meeting to find a solution to the issue are called on to exert strenuous efforts for ending the aggression on the camps and reaching a formula that can safeguard the interests of all factions in Lebanon. Unless serious action is taken now, the devastation will widen and more and more victims will fall. The ministers in Tunis are now facing a real test and should be able to overcome all obstacles standing in the way of a solution. They have to do that as they realise that the Iranian aggression on Iraq is now threatening all their countries and the Arab order at large. They ought to do that because they realise that the Israelis are continuing their aggression on the Arab Nation and are determined to maintain their occupation of Arab land. Any move to end the bloodshed in Lebanon is one step towards rallying the Arabs and joining their ranks in the face of external enemies.

Jordan's educational policies need evaluation

By Husni Ayesh

PRIME Minister Zaid Rifai made a statement during a recent visit to Irbid in which he said that the number of female students at Jordanian universities exceeds the number of males and that the number of women employed by the Ministry of Education far exceeds that of men, though the total number of women employed by the government in various departments is less than the number of men.

It is rather useful for Jordanian citizens to realise that the number of females in universities is substantially greater than male students although females form only 48 per cent of total number of Jordan's population. It is also essential to point out that the tendency of having more female students than males at universities is expected to grow year after year.

The reasons for higher female/male ratio at our universities can be summed up in the following:

— A great number of parents in Jordan prefer to send their sons abroad for higher studies and to keep their daughters at Jordanian universities. However, the total number of male students at Jordanian, Arab and foreign universities is four times more than the number of female students in Jordanian, Arab or foreign universities. The Ministry of Education maintains that between 60,000 to 80,000 Jordanian students are now studying abroad, but I believe that the true figure does not exceed 25,000. In any case, it is believed that the number of females among those is only 10 per cent since not many girls are sent abroad. These figures clearly reflect the fact that the number of male students in Jordanian, Arab or foreign universities is double that of females.

— The present criteria of the Ministry of Higher Education sponsored admission examination for the secondary stage have negatively affected the number of male students allowed to pursue higher studies while it positively helped the female students in this respect. According to the Ministry of Education's regulations this

year, 65 per cent of the total number of female students who passed the admission examination have been allowed to take up academic courses that lead to university education, while only 55 per cent of the male students were allowed this chance. As a result, the number of male students in the first secondary academic stream now stands at 13,000 against 17,000 females in the same class, which means an increase of females by 30 per cent. This gap is expected to widen further in the coming years and to have a similar effect at university level inside and outside Jordan.

— If we refer to the ministry's statistics of October 1984, we find that the number of male and female students in the first secondary academic stream was almost the same, 19,041 males and 18,971 females, a surplus of only 70 males over females. But with the introduction of the admission exam, the whole picture changed in October 1985, when the number of male students dropped to 16,545 against 19,207 females in the first secondary class. In October 1986, however, the number of students was further affected and records reveal that only 13,000 were registered as male students in the first secondary class while the number of females was 17,000. Also it has been noticed that the total number of male and female students of the same first secondary academic class continued to shrink one year after another, going down from 38,012 in 1984 to 35,752 in 1985 and down to 30,000 in 1986, though the population growth is on the increase all the time.

It should be said that educating the young generation in Jordan in general and the females in particular have been a remarkable achievement for Jordan. But this achievement should not allow us to overlook the present gap between the female and the male generation of the first secondary academic class and the increase in the number of male students in vocational training over females at that stage. This discrepancy does not reflect the desire to enable females to acquire academic learning and males to get vocational training, nor is it the result of preference of one type of education

over the other by any of the two sexes. But it is rather a result of the work of the educationalists who have thus far succeeded in creating opportunities for wide-ranging vocational training for male students, but failed to do the same for the females. This is because they had been still following a rule which gives preference in education matters to the males rather than females since employment had been for men rather than women.

By saying this I do not intend to heap praise over academic education or belittle vocational training, but I aim at projecting the negative social and educational results of the present branching of education, and underlining once again the need for Jordan to acquire a sound and unified educational system that can provide general and common education and scientific-literary-vocational training for all male and female students alike. We don't want to see students of the academic stream lacking vocational knowledge or a vocational student unaware of scientific knowledge. By offering dual education for all we will certainly remove from the minds of our students and parents any feeling of a social or educational inferiority that they tend to have when their sons and daughters are forced to take up a course of study which is not to their taste or liking.

If the present educational system is maintained I believe it will have negative consequences, and therefore, we should not be surprised when in a few years' time we see many vacant seats in our universities and when we discover that the number of male students there forms only one third of the number of females.

I believe that social problems will increase in the future as a result of the present educational policies but I also believe that we can and must take steps to avert such problems since we have sufficient time for that at present.

The writer is a prominent Jordanian educationalist who frequently contributes articles to the Jordan Times' Arabic daily sister Al Ra'i.

Disinformation campaigns cater to public's thirst for 'inside knowledge'

By Jacques Decornoy

PROBES into cases of

"disinformation" and revelations of "state secrets" are extremely popular in France just now, judging from the number of recently published books on such topics. What they all do is pander to the reading public's fondness for anything that smacks of inside information. True, this love of disclosure is only to be expected in view of the lies put out by governments or private business groups, their ill-disguised dirty tricks, their blatant manipulation of public opinion.

But it is equally obvious that if you go on talking about disinformation you end up not saying a word about the way the public is actually being informed. Surely the danger in constantly trying to unravel state secrets, or in trying to see reality solely in terms of such secrets, is that the plain, unvarnished truth may get forgotten.

Summing up the recent incident in which an American aircraft was shot down in Nicaragua, Eugene Hasenfus captured by government troops, Antony Lewis wrote in the International Herald Tribune: "This is an outrageous violation of international law." Elliott Abrams, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, said the other day. He was talking about the Nicaraguan government's temporary delay in allowing U.S. consular access to Mr. Hasenfus. That, from an administration that has violated international law wholesale in Nicaragua — and that ran away from the World Court adjudication of the issue. In its foolish shrillness, the remark is a telling indication of how American values and commonsense have been corrupted by the war on Nicaragua.

In just a few words, Lewis effectively demolished the official line by putting the facts in perspective: on the one hand, here was a consul who had been prevented for a few hours from visiting an agent who had been sent to attack the country in question; and on the other the United States had flouted the fundamental rules of international law. Unfortunately, such reminders of the facts are not as common as all that in the news

media.

The primary form of disinformation is, surely, the work of people whose task is precisely to inform the public, and who all too often, whether intentionally or not, confuse superficialities with the essentials — and who are sometimes even unaware of what the essentials are. The many issues which were discussed in the course of the debate over the so-called "new international information and communication order," even if the terms of that debate were on occasion ambiguous, cannot simply be dismissed with a stroke of the pen. Comte Alexandre de Marenches, who ran the French secret service for 11 years, recently brought out his memoirs, written in collaboration with star journalist Christine Ockrent; the book, "Dans le Secret des Princes," has since become a bestseller (see Guardian Weekly of October 26).

In it, he constantly refers to Western democracies as being "soft," and argues that the American press behaved in an "irresponsible" manner during the Vietnam War by publishing "the so-called Pentagon papers." In so doing, he says, it "helped the enemy." Whose enemy? The enemy of the United States? Or of a major power caught up in an enterprise that was at once reckless and logical?

On August 14 of this year, President Ronald Reagan gave the go-ahead for a disinformation campaign aimed at destabilising the Libyan regime. Eleven days later, the administration planted the following story in the prestigious and austere Wall Street Journal: because Colonel Muammar Qadhafi was planning bomb attacks, the possibility of another American strike against Libya could not be ruled out. The story was picked up by newspapers everywhere.

In Early October, the Washington Post revealed details of how that attempt to mislead public opinion had been organised, thus causing great embarrassment to the White House and unfavourable comment in the American press. Reagan then approved the setting up of a government bureau

whose task would be to denounce Soviet efforts to disseminate inaccurate information about the United States. The fact that Reagan took that decision at that particular moment was, said the State Department, "pure coincidence."

Caught between the two fires of disinformation and counter-disinformation, the news media are the first to crack up; they seem incapable of covering topics like Libya in anything approaching a rational manner.

Marenches is right: our democracies are "soft," but perhaps not in the sense he meant it. They are "soft" because they allow themselves to be sapped from within by their refusal to see the world as it really is, and because they end up, under the pretext of wishing to find out more about themselves, producing a self-portrait that is a caricature of reality.

"Ethiopianisation plus, Marxism equals the Soviet Union's conquest of Africa and therefore control of the world." This paranoid equation sums up fairly well a chapter from Andre Glucksmann and Thierry Woltont's new book, "Silence, on tue," an extract from which was carried in Paris-Match on October 17.

We read: "On September 12, 1985, in Revolution Square (in Addis Ababa), President Comrade Mengistu Haile Mariam celebrated the 11th anniversary of his coming to power (...). What did he talk about? Successes on the industrial front? In agriculture? In culture? In eradicating illiteracy? Of course not! He talked, yet again, about apartheid."

This piece of information is without any doubt a key element in Glucksmann and Woltont's argument: Ethiopia, which clearly has an imperial destiny, and which, on top of that, is now a Marxist state armed by the Soviet Union, has only one aim — to make South Africa (and therefore the whole of Africa) part of the totalitarian Communist bloc.

The information just quoted is quite specific, relayed by two well-known authors — published by the respectable house of Grasset. One can hardly expect Paris-Match readers to check such

confident assertions point by point.

Now let us turn to the official report on Mengistu's speech of September 12, 1985, in the Ethiopian Herald of the following day. What does it say? A banner headline on the front page reads: "The secretary general calls on the masses to close ranks and throw their collective energies into development." On page six, three and a half columns are given over to a report on his speech: three of those columns deal with 'development and its political preconditions, and only 17 lines discuss South Africa (in perfect "traditional" language).

In the nine other pages of the paper, South Africa is referred to only once more, in a Reuters report. The rest is devoted to international issues, science and so on. As for the editorial, which naturally talks about the anniversary celebrations, it breathes not a word about South Africa.

If that is not disinformation I don't know what is. No matter: by hook or by crook, the authors have to bolster their theory that "control of the world hinges on Johannesburg." We have heard this kind of thing before, indeed ever since the West, wracked by its foreign adventures and domestic crises, got into the habit of putting the frights on itself.

"Control of Japan," "control of China," "control of the Pacific," "control of the tropical seas" and so on — these are familiar old refrains, just like those simplistic equations that have now been trotted out for high on a century: Japan plus white technology equals the end of the West; Japanese know-how plus the Chinese masses equals the Yellow peril; Red Russia plus Yellow China equals the death of civilisation as we know it. Now we have the Black-Red peril. Now Johannesburg has become the main goal of that "other dream" which "is beginning to take shape: that of Pan-African communism."

The alarm bells are ringing. The journalist Michel Droit, who will represent the Academie Française on the new National Commission for Communications and Liberties, the body that presides over the freedom of information

in France, attacked the American Congress in Le Figaro on October 14 for what he called an irresponsible vote, and went on to discuss disinformation: "It is this kind of disinformation which has succeeded in convincing millions of men and women throughout the world that there is only one problem in South Africa: that of apartheid."

The same day, in its annual report, Amnesty International estimated that the number of South Africans arrested for political reasons in 1985 was 10,000. Since June 12, 1986, when the state of emergency was proclaimed, 20,000 have been jailed. Writing in the International Herald Tribune on October 15, the local correspondent of the Washington Post quoted extensively from a report put out by the Black Sash organisation on torture inflicted on young people aged between 12 and 18 which is likely to leave them permanently handicapped.

Reports of this kind, which, we are told, overlook the dangers of "Ethiopianisation" and make no mention of the "major reforms" being implemented by President Pieter Botha, forget the most important thing of all — Western interests.

And what ingratitude too! Their authors fail to mention the solicitude shown for us by (white) South Africans. This has not, however, escaped the attention of Jean Ferre, who writes on radio for the right-wing Figaro-Magazine. He urged us, in his October 11 column, to listen regularly to the broadcasts in French by South African Radio, and to "compare its news bulletins with those put out by Radio-France Internationale."

The same issue contained a lavish photo-feature on Namibia: "Fabulous Namibia: sand, sun and silence." That is about all it said about that "autonomous territory," apart from praising the quality of its lobsters, mentioning that anyone wishing to visit it will need a visa from the South African authorities, pointing out that "many ethnic groups now share Namibia," and putting a word in for the 200,000-strong seal colony at Cape Cross. The "silence" of Namibia? One can only suppose

that the landmines and the military helicopters are equipped with silence.

And then there is Jonas Savimbi, who with Reagan and Botha's backing, leads the UNITA rebels in neighbouring Angola. In Alexandre de Marenches' view, he is one of this century's greats, an anti-colonialist resistance hero, a latter-day Charles de Gaulle, an intellectual and moral giant. Marenches' admiration is unbounded and he is particularly impressed by Savimbi's command of French.

Pierre Pean writes, in his recent book "Secret d'Etat": "In a world with paranoid tendencies, press freedom is seen as a handicap: any type of news that is believed to weaken the nation is perceived as aggression against the Western camp. The human rights campaign, the fight against racism, support for those seeking independence, pacifism, and environmentalism are all regarded as potentially dangerous causes, because they are 'supported or initiated by the KGB in an attempt to weaken our democracies. This simplistic view, which sees everything in terms of East-West conflict, has led the secret services elsewhere to defend South Africa and to see the anti-apartheid campaign purely as a Russian disinformation manoeuvre."

It is regrettable that secret services have adopted this view. Their action is certainly facilitated by an abundance of unpaid "informers" who tell them what they want to hear.

In fact the brainwashing campaign now being organised by those whose jobs should be to inform has only just begun. This we are told by Louis Pauwels himself, editor of Figaro-Magazine, who, in a recent article called "How, quite simply to have done with the French Revolution," he wrote: "We are continuing, with our own broom, the great spring-clean undertaken by the intellectuals of the 80s."

Alexandres de Marenches need have no fear: if our democracies are too "soft" there will be plen of hard men to beef them up — Le Monde.

Yugoslavs may rehabilitate victims

By Vjekoslav Radovic

BELGRADE — A senior Yugoslav Communist has made cautious proposals for the rehabilitation of politicians purged for disagreeing with party policies.

Dusan Krcbic, member of the presidency (politburo) of the ruling League of Communists, said recently there was no reason why the party should not consider rehabilitating individuals who were purged unjustly.

His remarks came after months of press debate which began last summer when there were calls for the case of Milos Zanko, once a prominent politician, to be re-examined.

Krcbic was quoted in an interview with the official Tanjug News Agency as saying "It was beyond doubt that some demands (for rehabilitation) were justified."

"There is no reason why the League of Communists should avoid discussion of the topic," he was quoted as saying. But he said the party should avoid dramatising individual cases or rehabilitating proponents of "unacceptable ideas."

Western diplomats said this appeared to refer to those who challenged the basic precepts of

Yugoslavia's socialist system.

When an individual is purged, he loses his government or party position and is removed from public life. If he were to be rehabilitated he would be restored to public life, but would be unlikely to gain an important post.

Zanko was sacked as vice-president of parliament in 1971 for criticising a rise of nationalism in the Republic of Croatia.

Krcbic named two politicians in the ethnically torn Kosovo province, Jovo Sotra and Kadri Reufi, as examples of people whose rehabilitation should be considered.

They were purged in 1973 for calling attention to a wave of Albanian nationalism in the province, which eight years later exploded in ethnic riots and led to martial law being imposed.

Krcbic said events had proved that Sotra and Reufi were right and that the party should rehabilitate them.

The Kosovo and Croatian leaderships who purged Sotra, Reufi, Zanko, and others, were later deposed themselves but their own victims were never rehabilitated.

Unlike Serbian writer Dobrica Cosic, purged for dissenting views on Kosovo in 1969, Sotra, Reufi and Zanko stayed loyal to the

party.

The latter stand better chances of being rehabilitated than Cosic or others who became critics of the party, diplomatic sources said.

They said the least likely candidate for rehabilitation is Milovan Djilas, once closest collaborator of the late leader Marshal Tito. He was purged in 1954, accused of advocating a Western-style democracy, and is now the country's leading opposition figure.

Cosic is a best-selling writer and a member of a "Committee for protection of freedom of thought and expression," proposing free elections and a pluralistic political system. Djilas, once Tito's favoured lieutenant, proposes democratic socialism.

Yugoslav intellectuals have lately demanded rehabilitation on a wider scale and national reconciliation of opposing ideologies, Communist and non-Communist alike.

They met strong criticism from politicians in power. Dragoljub Petrovic, a professor, was jailed for saying Communists were no better than their opponents.

Hundreds of prominent politicians have been purged since 1948, when the first great purge took place, following Tito's split with Stalin.

In 1971 the entire Croatian

leadership was purged on charges of nationalism, like the Kosovo leadership in 1981. In 1972 "liberals" were purged in Serbia.

Tito hinted at possible rehabilitations in 1974, but none materialised.

"We should be considerate toward these people. We should not ban them forever," he said. But none of the purged politicians made a comeback.

Slavoljub Djukic, leading commentator at the semi-official newspaper Politika, said rehabilitation prospects depend much on politicians in power who contributed to the downfall of Sotra, Reufi, Zanko and other

purge victims. Rehabilitating them could mean calling someone to task for purging them, which could upset the existing balance of power.

Diplomats in Belgrade say a major obstacle is the fact that all purges took place with Tito's approval or instigation.

Some politicians have said that calls for rehabilitation are aimed at discrediting Tito and the party.

It would upset the "belief that the party is never wrong" and the party is still not ready to admit it, Djukic said.

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Rifai assures deputies of Jordan's creditworthiness

(Continued from page 1)

government's subsidy for these organisations, specially those that will eventually generate their own income and become independent. The performance of these organisations within the framework of special laws will allow them sufficient flexibility to function on sound basis. But any amendment of these laws could deprive these organisations of their financial and administrative independence and could bring about an imbalance in their capability to achieve their goal. Nevertheless, the Royal Commission for the Development of Civil Service in Jordan is now considering linking some of these organisations with ministries, and we will report to Parliament details of the commission's findings.

"Second: Studies and research. The Financial Committee has recommended a reduction of the expenses on studies and research except those spent on oil and mineral exploration. I would like to explain the following points in this regard:

"A) The new five-year plan includes numerous development projects which require study and research for determining their feasibility. What has been allocated in the 1987 budget is only three per cent of the capital expenditure, which is less by 1.3 per cent of the total volume of the 1987 budget.

"B) Part of the allocations for the studies and research covers the cost of design and supervision of implementation of these projects. "C) The government was careful to give priority in these studies for the designs and the supervision to be carried out by local engineering and consultancy offices and so most of the allocations will be spent in Jordan.

"D) The government supports the Financial Committee's recommendation to try to reduce expenses by depending on the skills and experience of the government's technical services and departments, and will try to implement this recommendation as best as it can.

"Third: Loans to municipal and village councils.

The Financial Committee has submitted a recommendation linking interest due from these councils to their contribution in the electrification of rural region and demanded that the due interest be reduced, and rescheduled for easier repayment. Here, I would like to point out that the financial problems which these councils have been suffering from and their root causes are various and are not related only to the electrification of rural regions. Financial difficulties arose due largely to these councils' desire to purchase land and build schools and roads, etc. These commitments were not paralleled with sufficient effort on the part of these councils to collect their debts and raise sufficient funds and so the loans and interest accumulated, with the result that these councils' income was far less than their financial commitments with adverse consequences to their projects.

"But the government realised these problems and helped reduce the financial burden of these councils by taking upon itself the cost of building roads and maintaining them. The government intends to increase its share in the construction of schools and has set up a committee to study the councils' financial situation to help them continue to operate on sound basis. This committee will submit its study to the Cabinet for endorsement.

"Fourth: Economic and financial policy. "A) The Financial Committee has recommended an amendment to the general debts law Number (1) of 1971 for considering foreign debts on the same level with internal debts in terms of placing a ceiling for external debt is not in the interest of the Kingdom for the following reasons: "Most external loans are on long and easy terms and they were used for implementing development projects. Therefore, imposing a ceiling for funds needed for investments will curtail the implementation of income-generating projects and will directly affect the rates of growth and economic and social developments as a whole, including projects in the five-year plans for the East and West Banks.

"Failure by Arab countries to honour their financial commitment to Jordan has caused an imbalance and delayed the repayment of external loans. Therefore, the government was forced to resort to external loans in order to maintain its credibility and was forced to shoulder additional interests.

"The impact of the external loans on the national economy is reflected in a proportion with the exports and services and this amounted to 12.4 per cent in 1986 far below the internationally recognised dangerous line which is 20 per cent. The government has however made it a point to make its annual external loans less than the annual premiums and interests on the loans.

"B) The Financial Committee referred to the problem of unemployment. I emphasise that the government is keen on handling this issue through a programme of investments within the five-year plan which will eventually make available 100,000 jobs, in addition to other available means. The government has carried out a great deal of effective measures in vocational training to meet the requirements of national development and is giving special training to engineers and physicians. The government has formed a ministerial committee to study the effects of the unemployment problem and provide solutions.

"The countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council have told us of their desire to keep Jordanian workers and help us to open new markets to absorb Jordanian manpower.

"C) The Financial Committee has urged the government to suppress expenses so that funds can be made available for financing capital projects through local revenues. The government is grateful for the recommendation and promises to control expenses. "However, it should be pointed out that the 1987 budget underlines the fact that local revenues are, for the first time, equal to current expenses and this is a great achievement, and we hope to raise more funds to finance capital expenditure.

"D) The government approves of the committee's recommendation calling for confining the Ministry of Supply's role to trading in basic commodities. The government is about to finalise a draft law on supply which would define the commodities which the ministry should deal with. This law will be submitted to Parliament. "As to the remark on commercial dealings by the Ministry of Supply, I would like to point out that these dealings are

considered as part of the public fund. Details of the trading operations appear in the 1987 general budget. But I would like to point out that the trading account was introduced to take care of the operations pertaining to strategic storage of basic commodities for the country and the government's own warehouses in accordance with Article 114 of the Constitution.

"E) As to the JD 25 million referred to in the budget and which will be spent in accordance with a decision by the Cabinet, I say that this sum is part of the investment programme which the government announced this year to stimulate economic activity in the Kingdom through expediting the process of spending on projects included in the current five-year plan, specially those covering building of schools and health centres and giving loans to organisations and housing projects for families with limited income and building government complexes in different provinces.

"Finally I would like to say that the government is seeking to create an opportune investment climate to find a suitable basis for giving momentum to the development process and to deal with the pressing economic issues. "The government is seeking to strengthen the local productive foundation of the country and employ national savings and attract Arab and foreign capital to boost the Kingdom's foreign currency reserves and maintain the strength of the dinar.

"Fifth: The agricultural sector. "Before commenting on the committee's recommendations on the agricultural sector, I would like to point out that the agriculture sector's share in the budget JD 42.6 million. Most of this amount will benefit capital agriculture expenditure. This amount is nearly 10 per cent of the budget.

"Now I would like to point out the following: "A) The government approves the committee's recommendation which calls for coordinating the activities of the public organisations specialising in the agriculture sector and support a call for cancelling dual performance in their operations. The government also wants to define these organisations' relations with the Ministry of Agriculture, and this subject is in the hands of the Royal Commission for developing the Civil Service system in the country.

"B) Concerning the reduction of the cost of agriculture production and the building of roads, (to help farmers), the government has been expanding its operations in producing saplings in different regions and selling them at reasonable prices to the farmers. The government has reduced the cost of electricity by 20 per cent and set new tariffs for power used in agriculture projects. The Ministry of Agriculture is constantly controlling production and helping the farmers and providing subsidy for them to encourage them to pursue their work despite seasonal fluctuations, bottlenecks in marketing and the high cost of production. A programme will be worked out for building roads in farming areas or different provinces.

"C) The government is concerned with the marketing of agricultural products and will enact a new law for the Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC) in the coming weeks. The ACC will supervise the marketing operations and will

organise the relationship between the different parties in the marketing process.

"We have already started to deal with the bottlenecks in the marketing process by embarking on the agricultural pattern system and providing encouraging prices for basic crops and establishing food processing industries.

"D) Animal wealth is being given due care and support in the agricultural sector. The government reduced the prices of barley and maize and established a company to handle the slaughter of poultry. This year we seem to have a lot of rain which foretells of a bountiful harvest and we have already started growing crops in large areas of lands.

"Sixth: The services sector "A) The government shares with the Financial Committee its concern over developing rural regions and remote areas and this has been given priority in the five-year plan and is clear in the 1987 budget.

"B) The government supports the committee's call for speeding up the implementation of water and health projects and instructions have been given to the concerned authorities in this concern.

"C) The Housing Corporation has stopped setting up expensive housing estates and is now concentrating its efforts on housing projects for employees and for people with limited income.

"D) The government supports the recommendations on confining, to a single corporation the task of planning work and setting specifications for computers to be bought by ministries and other organisations. This is what the National Committee on Technology and Science is trying to do.

"E) Social development is an integral part of comprehensive development and is based on two concepts: Helping the needy families financially and providing means for setting up small projects for the needy. This is the work of

the National Aid Fund and the objective of the Ministry of Social Development.

"I hereby end my remarks about the committee's report and I would like to comment on remarks made by the deputies during the session: The development programme for the occupied territories.

"The government has allocated JD 10 million to contribute to projects included in this programme which aims at supporting the steadfastness of the Arab people under Israeli rule. The government is seeking to raise funds for financing these projects in constant contacts with Arab and friendly countries and various money-lending institutions, some of which have already pledged to provide funds. As to supervising the implementation of these projects, the government has set up ministerial committee chaired by the deputy prime minister to work out a formula for implementation of the projects and for defining priorities after consultations with the civil authorities of the West Bank and the local councils there and the Parliament members from the West Bank.

"As to the measures concerning travel to and from the West Bank through the bridges the government has been going ahead with plans for reducing these measures but more is to be done in this respect.

"On coordinating the government's efforts with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in the development plan for the occupied territories, I say that the government has already invited the PLO to participate in the development conference which was held in Amman but the PLO declined to come, though on earlier occasions it had given its consent to the plan.

"As to the remarks of Deputy Riad Al Nawsieh about this plan for the West Bank, I would say that this was occurred in the speech from the throne and was

supported by Parliament in the reply to that speech and was earlier endorsed by the PLO while coordination was going on with the Jordanian government. The plan was also approved by all Arab and friendly nations which took part in the Amman development conference this year. "As to Mr. Nawsieh's reference to the plan as being an American-Zionist plan, I say this is something that does not deserve any reply and can only be described as some form of outbidding and nonsense only aimed at serving certain objectives. These remarks are not based on firm foundations nor are they founded on national stands and they definitely do not serve national interests.

"On what has been said on unemployment, I can say that the presence of non-Jordanian workers in the country does not create unemployment. The unemployment in Jordan is a direct result of the reluctance by Jordanians to take up jobs now filled by non-Jordanians. The government has issued strict instructions to all businesses to give priority in employment to Jordanians and to tighten control over non-Jordanian workers employed in the country to ensure they were doing jobs for which they were brought here.

"On what has been said about the hospitals of Karak and Tafleh: I say that an amount of JD 500,000 has been allocated in the budget for Tafleh Hospital and the cost of Karak Hospital will be shared by the Italian and the Jordanian governments.

"Regarding the Public Security Department's (PSD) purchase of West German Audi cars, the truth is that the department bought 240 cars and not 400 vehicles as was suggested by Deputy Akaleh.

"The purchase of these Audi cars, in addition to other necessary equipment, purchased by the Armed Forces and the PSD, was deemed necessary to upgrade the standard of the Armed Forces

figures which are not even based on the simplest basis of financial rules.

"Touching on what has been raised during the discussions over the privatisation of a number of public companies into companies, we have constantly and continuously declared that the transformation of the companies' status will commence on a gradual basis and after thoroughly studying the case of each of the companies.

"The privatisation scheme will commence by transforming the status of the public-owned institution into a public shareholding company with all its shares owned by the public sector. At a later stage, parts of these shares might be sold to the private sector. The reasons behind the privatisation scheme is to allow these companies to operate in an atmosphere of flexibility in order to rely on its own revenues instead of depending on the treasury in areas related to its financing.

"It is regrettable to hear such talks in Parliament, especially about subjects that are void of sound source but based on rumours designed to sow dissension. There is no truth in what has been said about the government's intention to transform public organisations into private companies in response to recommendations by international agencies or foreign funds. We never had such recommendations by any one. All the plans have been the result of the government's initiatives.

"I must emphasise that the government will study the definite demands and requests made by the deputies and will respond to whatever possible of them.

"The government is thankful to the deputies and the members of the Financial Committee for their efforts and I pledge that the government will continue to exert efforts for implementing resolutions passed by Parliament based on the provisions of the Constitution."

"On the budget appendix, I would like to stress that the government adheres to the budget law and issues budget appendix in special cases that need emergency allocations.

"On remarks made by Deputy Nawsieh concerning the deficit figures in the 1987 draft budget, I say that the figures given by Mr. Nawsieh are imaginary and baseless, and we really do not know how he arrived at these

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"It is regrettable to hear such talks in Parliament, especially about subjects that are void of sound source but based on rumours designed to sow dissension. There is no truth in what has been said about the government's intention to transform public organisations into private companies in response to recommendations by international agencies or foreign funds. We never had such recommendations by any one. All the plans have been the result of the government's initiatives.

"I must emphasise that the government will study the definite demands and requests made by the deputies and will respond to whatever possible of them.

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Lower House members debate objectives and scope of 1987 budget

The following are major excerpts from speeches delivered by Lower House deputies during yesterday's debate on the national budget for 1987:



Mufeed Mubaslat (Nablus)

"The new budget aims at reducing expenditure and the deficit in the balance of payment and this reflects the government's keenness on achieving self-sufficiency in Jordan and developing local resources which in turn would stimulate the national economy."

"I appreciate the government's endeavours in this respect and also support its efforts to involve the private sector in the process of boosting the economy."

"We also support the proposed projects in the budget despite the adverse elements that have affected the economies of the Middle East countries. We also support the government's endeavours for boosting the power of the Armed Forces which forms a protecting shield for the nation and the government's plans to promote the educational, health, and public services in the occupied Arab territories."



Tahseen Al Faris (Nablus)

"King Hussein has said that people of the two banks of Jordan are in the same boat confronting the same challenges and dangers... and this places freedom and responsibility on officials and citizens in the East and West Banks. It should be said there can be no Palestine without Jordan and no Jordan without Palestine since the two peoples from one family and therefore should join hands to confront the Zionists and their expansionist policies."

"It is clear that Israel will not give anything to Jordan but is pursuing a policy of evicting the indigenous population, a policy which would bring a disaster to Jordan which cannot cope with waves of migrant Palestinians. For this reason and as a matter of self-defence I believe the Jordanian government should extend all possible help and assistance to the people of the occupied Arab territories to thwart enemy plans."

"Since the people of the occupied West Bank are Jordanian citizens the government ought to extend public services to them and should ease measures that have been obstructing the West Bankers from travelling across the bridges."

"We support the Jordanian government and we seek to protect this country's security and its people and we support the unity of the two peoples under the leadership of His Majesty King

Hussein. "We call on the government to set up effective departments in the West Bank to ensure effective health, agricultural, educational and developmental services. We support the five-year plan for the occupied territories which, if translated into reality, will revive hopes in the hearts of the Arab people under Israeli rule."



Edward Khamis (Bethlehem)

"Although Jordan enjoys a great deal of security and stability, I would like to point out that there are various parties trying to undermine the stability and security of the Kingdom."

"One of these parties is based in the occupied territories and its members are known to be agents for the Israeli occupation. This party is notorious as stooges and mercenaries for external forces."

"The task of the second party, which is based outside the occupied territories, is trading the Palestinian cause and national cause for its own interests. What is more crucial on the country is the third party, based in the country, which never ceases to spread rumours geared to undermine the stability and security of the Kingdom. Members of this party can only be described as seeking to hold a portfolio in the cabinet even if the path to the post in question shall jeopardise public interests."

"There is a point to be raised here and that is the crime and punishment principle, which is not being implemented correctly. It is a wrong policy when hypocrites and instigators are commended by the government and those who show sincere nationalism to the country are put on the shelf."

"This country stands out to be one where freedom and democracy are considered less than those attained in other states of the Middle East. However, we seek more of freedom of expression, thought, press and opinion within the limits that the constitution allows."

"As for the local press, I am sorry to say it is not efficient to the extent of reflecting the up-to-date developments. Nevertheless, if the people want to obtain information on certain developments they resort to foreign media in order to know of the real version of the course of events in question."

"The Arab World is in a deep coma and the Palestinian refugees are under continuous assault in Lebanon. The Israeli flag is hoisted over vast Arab lands and the Persian (Iranian) flag has found a base in Lebanon. There may come a time when both banners have been hoisted over some Arab capitals."

"In order to curb further deterioration in the current Arab situation, I appeal to the Palestinian people to shun side differences in favour of total solidarity and to refuse to bow to domination by any external power. The Palestinian people should act independently and join hands with Jordan in order to

secure the common goal. "The Palestinian people must understand that they have become an experiment zone for conspiracies against their existence by some Arab regimes and imperialism."

"Having gone through the 1987 budget, I find out that the government has sought practical and realistic figures and avoided astronomical numbers."

"I wish to extend my appreciation to the government for allocating funds in the 1987 budget to develop the occupied territories."



Fayyad Jarrar (Jenin)

"The 1987 fiscal budget is to be commended specially as it is being planned at a time when the Arab region witnesses unfavourable economic developments. The various elements of the budget reflect confidence and sound planning; therefore I approve the budget as it was submitted to the House and support the government's efforts."

"This budget proves that the government is exerting efforts to boost the might of the Armed Forces and recruiting and training the People's Army and also civil defence and public security."

"It is clear from the budget that the government is seeking to ensure food security in the country through developing agriculture and helping farmers and reclaiming land and is seeking to ensure further investments from Arab and foreign countries in Jordan."

"The government is now implementing a five-year development plan in the East Bank and plans to implement a similar one in the occupied Arab territories. This policy is a translation of the true unity between the two banks and is bound to bolster the cohesion between the two peoples."



Hafiz Abdul Nabi (Hebron)

"I appreciate the work of the House Financial Committee and its recommendations with regard to the budget. We can see that the budget is abound with projects that are aimed at bolstering the social and economic sectors in the country."

"The people of the occupied Arab territories are steadfast in the face of Israel's measures and they are awaiting the implementation of the Jordanian-sponsored five-year plan which is bound to bolster their steadfastness and alleviate their sufferings."

"The people of the occupied

Arab territories are thankful to the government for its help in marketing their crops in Jordan and in the other Arab states and call on the government to help them deal with the unemployment problem which mainly affects university graduates."

"The people of the occupied Arab territories request the government to grant them annual permits to come to the East Bank for work."

"The people of the West Bank request the government to allow them to cross the border into Egyptian territory through Rafah and Al Arish — a measure that is being allowed to the people of the Gaza Strip — now that Jordan's political and economic relations with Egypt have been resumed as normal. This will help boost the steadfastness of the Arab people and will save them unnecessary expenses of travelling to Egypt through other means."

"West Bank employees appointed to their posts after the 1967 war hope that the Jordanian government pay them salaries that can improve their living conditions."

"Employees appointed in the West Bank before the 1967 war and whose salaries were frozen between 1971 and 1974 hope that the government release their frozen salaries."

"A quick look at the budget figures reveals that the interest which the government intends to pay on internal loans amounts to JD 23 million and interest on external loans amounts to JD 44.235 million, a total of JD 67.235 million. I believe that this country can get loans without paying interest like those loans obtained from the Islamic Development Bank."



Jalal Al Qallah (Bani Hassan)

"I support the wise policies of His Majesty the King and that of his government and praise efforts being made for strengthening the Armed Forces and public security."

"I wish to express deep gratitude to the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), especially Saudi Arabia, for their continued financial assistance to Jordan and also for their support for Iraq which is now defending the eastern borders of the Arab Nation."

"I support the government's efforts in implementing projects and the allocations made for them in the 1987 budget but I wish to make the following remarks:

"First I call on the government to do more towards stemming the migration of people from rural to urban regions and it can do this by providing the essential services and work for the unemployed."

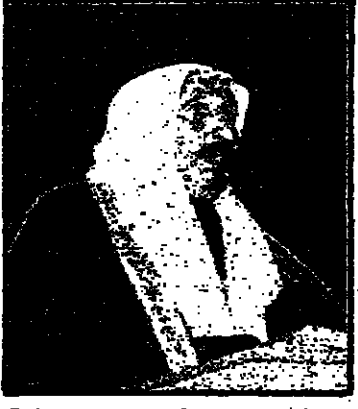
"It is true that water, electricity and communications are available but we need income-generating projects to help keep the people in their land."

"Second, schools have been made available in every village and town in the rural and urban regions but we need to have more qualified people to offer education in 'model schools' in our rural regions."

"Third, we demand that integrated health centres be established and sports and youth centres set up to help keep our younger generation close to their community."

"Fourth, we demand that the government reduce the cost of agricultural production by reducing the prices of seeds and fertilisers and also fuel and we ask that roads be built to facilitate the marketing of our produce."

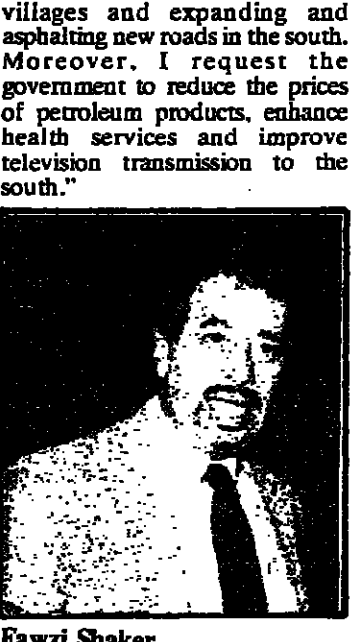
"I demand that the government reduce the prices of oil products as their prices have now dropped worldwide and call on government to help remove the danger threatening the villages and towns around the Khirbet Al Samra wastewater treatment plant because their inhabitants are complaining from bad smell and insects that carry diseases."



Faisal Al Jazi (Bedouins of the south)

"In my viewpoint the 1987 budget is well planned and designed to cope with the Kingdom's needs and expenditures."

"Nevertheless, I call on the government to extend further efforts towards developing the southern regions of the Kingdom by digging artesian wells for irrigation, providing electricity to villages and expanding and asphalted new roads in the south. Moreover, I request the government to reduce the prices of petroleum products, enhance health services and improve television transmission to the south."



Fawzi Shaker (Tafleh)

"I believe the permanent deficit in the budget is due to over-expenditure on the internal front and to external links and factors affecting our economy."

"There is no way out of this dilemma except through planning for a healthy economy which depends on our internal capabilities and resources and which is free from external factors, especially foreign loans. By doing this, we can help the state to avoid any foreign pressures and influences that contradict our national and pan-Arab aims. This also requires us to strengthen our Armed Forces by supplying them with modern weapons from friendly countries with infringing upon our sovereignty."

"We should expend special efforts to get out from the economic recession that has hit us hard, particularly in the last three years. Many Third World countries have been hit by economic recessions, especially in our Arab region. This appears to be a part of an American-Zionist-Imperialist plot which aims at vanquishing the Arab will and steadfastness in favour of imposing surrenderist political deals on us."

"I urge that we work towards avoiding dependence on foreign loans which increase our foreign debts and which constitute a heavy burden on this country's future. We can do this by establishing productive projects (industrial and agricultural) that depend on national expertise and manpower, and by undertaking educational programme that aim at quenching thirst for individual and selfish consumption."

"Our farmers are suffering, I think this is due to snags in

marketing, because there is a big difference between what the farmer gets for his produce and the market price. Here I ask: "Who benefits from this? Is it the rich farmers, or the middleman, or the poor citizen, or any other party unknown to you?" Here is one example for you: In the past few weeks a kilogramme of tomatoes sold for 450 fils in the market, while the farmer was selling a whole box of tomatoes (8-10 kilos) for 500-700 fils. That's why I would like to go back to a proposal I made last year, and that's the government should open the door for the farmer to market his produce to the market directly. As for government support for the agricultural sector, I would like to ask whether this support has been distributed fairly and evenly."

"In the industrial field, I understand that in advanced countries protectionist measures benefit the producer and the consumer equally. But here the case seems to be different. Products of those local industries that have been protected have shot up in price, despite the fact that the price of oil and labour wages have gone down."

"I therefore urge a reconsideration of the protectionist measures that have been taken by the government and request that the door be opened for establishing new local industries that have been studied."

"I fully support the national exploration programme for oil. We should develop this programme, giving priority to employing national expertise and manpower. I also call for lowering the price of fuel and electricity for citizens."

"The Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) has been doing very well, and I wonder why it is being considered for privatisation at a time when it has been making good profit. Could we not save the \$6 million that we spent on the cost of study for its privatisation? As to expanding the railroad network that will carry our phosphates exports, I hope that it could be done at a lower cost, or in barter for phosphates. "As to modernising our airlines, I think the step comes at a time when we need all our efforts towards revitalising the economy and not to burden it with more foreign loans."

"In the field of education, I demand that we open more universities and work towards expanding the existing ones, so that all students have the chance to study here and not abroad. This would save the Treasury a lot of money. Also, I call on the government to do justice unto all students who wish to join a university. This should be done through either cancelling exemptions for some students or reducing the number of those exemptions."

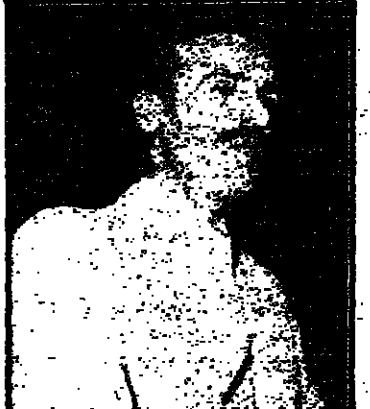
"On the development plan for the West Bank, I would like to ask a number of questions: — "What are its effects on the Jordanian economy? — "How would the plan affect development projects in the West Bank? Will the Zionist enemy agree to such projects if they are going to help the Palestinians steadfast and stay on their land? — "Why was this plan — whose aim is nationalistic and legitimate — not executed in cooperation with leadership of the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people?"

"In the field of information, we have noticed that information media have not been playing their role in educating citizens. I demand that the media be given a major role within a clear information policy to educate the citizen socially, culturally and economically. The field of information should be a forum for objective and responsible dialogue, without imposing restrictions on freedoms of speech and publication. This is the least we could do in the absence of political parties and organisations which believe in the constitution under the leadership of His Majesty."

"I regret that the government is not giving its full attention to the youth sector. Those who study the government's programme carefully would notice the absence of an integrated plan for the youth of our country who are the backbone of society."

"In the field of Arab economic cooperation, and in treatment of Arab nationals in the various Arab countries, we wonder why Jordanians do not get a fair treatment like other Arab nationals are fairly treated in Jordan."

"To build a strong Jordan, all efforts should be made to achieve Arab solidarity. This should be done by stopping the war against Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and by stopping the Iran-Iraq war. I call upon the government to work towards strengthening inter-Arab relations as the only way to confront the Israeli enemy."



Abdullah Al Akayleh (Tafleh)

"A close look at the draft budget reveals a number of issues that must be addressed."

"State debts: State debts, especially foreign debts, is in a state of an upward surge. Most of the loans are of high interest rates; and compared to our financial capability to fulfil our obligations, those loans are becoming intolerable, especially in these times when the country is passing through hard times. The debts of JD 1 billion and debt service, that in 1987 amounts to JD 168.2 million, are both intolerable and call for an immediate revision of our borrowing policies at this stage when high interest rate, this House, in 1985, agreed to form with the government a delegation to visit Arab and Islamic countries to seek interest-free Islamic-type loans."

"Stability of the dinar: The holding of the dinar while other currencies are declining is a satisfying fact, and it reflects in Jordanian expatriates' faith and confidence in the national currency."

"The draft budget for 1987 has stated that had it not been for past commitments that accumulated since the beginning of the 70s, the 1986 budget would have seen a surplus. I ask the government what are these commitments and how much would have been the surplus? And meanwhile, I learned that about JD 95 million had been saved from fuel costs due to the collapse of oil prices. The draft budget does not show this nor does it show where the government intends to spend it. And does the government intend to keep oil prices as they are? It is not unreasonable that Jordanians should continue to pay for petrol double the international price considering the hardships they are passing through."

"Unemployment: We all know that unemployment is on the increase. The Civil Service Commission and the ministries and government departments are being flooded by jobseekers. A greater part of my job as a deputy, and I am sure of yours too, is being devoted to citizens seeking work. What did the government plan for remedying this pressing problem? We know that a government commission was formed for this purpose, but we did not hear anything on any progress in this direction. I call on the government to initiate projects that would absorb the highest number of job seekers."

"Support for the Armed Forces: We believe that all our developmental progress and our existence depend highly on our Armed Forces and in equipping them with the latest types of equipment to enhance their fighting capability for deterring the Zionist enemy. We therefore see no increase in the Armed Forces allocations although this House has taken a decision to this effect."

"Education: There is of course another 'army' in this country; I mean the army of teachers. I call on the government to better their living condition, for they are the carrier of the noblest message: that of educating our youth, our future generations."

"Health: The government has announced the allocation of JD 12 million for hospitals. Out of that amount only half a million is allocated for Tafleh hospital, a sum that is barely enough for making studies. Tafleh hospital is the governorate's number-one priority and I therefore, call on the government to increase its allocations for that vital project."

"The Jordan Valley Authority (JVA): I have noticed that a sum of JD 2.23 million, has been allocated for JVA research and studies. I find this to be an enormous sum and ask the government to entrust the authority's budget to carry on such projects. There has been much talk about the authority's distribution of land lots. I ask the government to provide this House with a list of land allocations in the Jordan Valley."

"The TCC: The TCC was allocated JD 20 million in the same time when the government is talking of privatising the corporation. I also question the philosophy behind privatising the TCC which generates an annual income of JD 35 million to the treasury. What could be the sole concern of a telephone company except to make profit?"

"I think the trend behind the privatisation of public concerns follows directives from U.S. AID. U.S. AID reports on Jordan advice that aid to Jordan should be directed to private enterprises rather to the public sector. The question is: Should we change economic structures based on those reports? Don't we have enough experts to spin out foreign solutions to our problems?"

"Based on the above I call on the government:

(1) — "To control expenditure and to save public funds. Two examples show that the concerned authorities are not on this line. First the purchase of 400 Audi buses for JD 1.8 million and 100 buses for JD 400,000 for the same company. I ask: does our economic situation allow this? Second, the purchase of Mr. Hassan Al Kayed's house for JD 125,000, for the Department of Antiquities."

(2) — "To start dealing with the problem of unemployment."

(3) — "To give priority to health projects. And therefore, I ask for more funds for Tafleh hospital."

(4) — "To link Tafleh Governorate with the Jordan Valley by road, a project that I campaigned for so long, and which I did not find mentioned in the draft budget."

"Finally I want to ask the government to adhere to the Prophet Mohammad's saying: 'who sleeps secure in his home, healthy in his body and in possession of his day's food, who owns the world.' I ask the government to stop harassing the youth without any reason."



Abdul Wahab Al Tarawneh (Karak)

"We are confident in the government's ability to implement all what has been promised in the 1987 draft budget in general and raise the citizen's quality of life and the improvement of the agricultural sector in particular. However, the allocation of JD 4.5 million in the draft budget for agricultural purposes is a modest amount which does not suit the government's ambitious moves to breathe life into this sector."

"I suggest that the government transfers part of its total allocations in the 1987 budget for the agricultural sector to support the farmer and this sector."

"I also suggest to the government that it reschedule the loans it has extended to farmers to ten-year periods, instead of the present five-year terms, and grant the farmers a grace period of two years out of the total 10 years."

"We also support all plans to consolidate the pan-Arab agricultural and economic projects provided that the Jordanian farmer is protected."

"I also urge the government to form an investigative committee to be entrusted with visiting the farmers and gaining knowledge of their problems, and suggesting solutions."

"I support suggestions made by my colleagues over reducing prices of fuel in general and of diesel in particular to lower the farmer's cost of production and help him to increase his revenues."

"We also urge the government to support the budget of the Yarmouk University to allow educational institutions to increase student occupancy capacity."

"I would like to remind the government over the importance of drafting a new law on 'Frauds made by public servants and bringing to book misusers of public funds.'"

"We would be grateful if a draft law is introduced to indemnify ministers of public posts in 1970."

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Deputies urge stepped-up efforts to achieve national economic goals



Nazih Ammarin (Karak)

"The 1987 draft budget is an actual translation for the speech from the throne and comes in response to the needs of the Jordanian citizen for their stability and security."

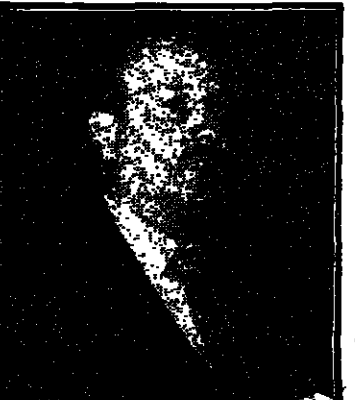
"Our Jordanian Armed Forces is the symbol of national unity and is the defenders of Jordan's security and the carriers of the principles of the Great Arab Revolt."

"For the first time in the country's financial history, the budget has exceeded the JD 1 billion mark, and this is a reflection of the keenness to pursue the march of development and to develop the national economy despite the limited financial resources the country enjoys."

"The industrial sector has been guarded with a wide range of measures that aim at encouraging and boosting the local industries."

"I call on the Audit Bureau to reach international standards in terms of quality and quantity to suit the increasing amounts allocated in the 1987 budget."

"I do hope that the government will grant the health sector priority, specially in the area related to adopting a national and comprehensive health insurance scheme. I also hope that the government will offer the support needed for the Karak Governorate hospital."



Ahmad Al Khofahi (Irbid)

Ziad Younis (Tulkarem)

"I call on the Arab and friendly countries to take part in implementing the comprehensive socio-economic development plan for the occupied territories in order to help us regain our legitimate rights in our occupied land."

"The significant financial allocation for development projects in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and as outlined by the 1987 draft budget is a national need which aims at strengthening the steadfastness of people living in the occupied territories."

"I also support the Financial Committee's appreciation for the government's efforts to tackle the present economic issues, including encouragement of local and regional capital investment in the production sector. I also praise the government for the steps it has taken to encourage investments such as allowing the private sector to take part in designing the overall economic policy, giving priorities for the local contracting companies over foreign companies, marketing Jordanian

products in Arab and neighbouring markets, establishing holding companies and treating Arab investors on equal footing with Jordanian capitalholders."

"These actions have allowed the Jordanian dinar to maintain its value at a time when the face values of the majority of foreign currencies have declined. I also support on the committee's recommendations regarding the Jordanian Armed Forces, the financial and economic policies as well as the sectors of services and agriculture."

"I thank the government for allocating a total of JD 8 million for the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs to allow for investment in the Awqaf lands and to cover the expenses of Islamic cultural centres, schools and mosques and to provide qualified preachers in the Kingdom's mosques which are spread in the East and West Banks."

"I call on the government to absorb unemployed university graduates in its institutions in the West Bank, to cash all frozen salaries of public servants working in the West Bank since 1967. These have reached a total of 33 months in dues and to treat retired servicemen in the West Bank on equal terms with ex-servicemen of the East Bank."

"I also urge the government to market the surplus of agricultural produce in the East and West Banks through the agricultural marketing company and to offer financial support for farmers who are adhering to the agricultural cropping pattern."

"I hope that the government will earmark the needed finances for the Islamic scientific and educational college in Qalqiliyah."

"I also call on the Cabinet to support the existing health institutions in the West Bank and to increase the allocations for the national aid fund."



Riad Nawaiseh (Karak)

"As you know, the draft budget law represents the financial and economic aspects of the general policy of the government. And as such, it gives us the opportunity to look at and give our opinion on this policy as a political, economic and social programme for the next year."

"First I want to pay tribute to the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation on their heroic stand against Israel's arbitrary and oppressive measures and I want to remind them that the eventual victory will be theirs no matter how long it might take."

"On the 1987 budget, I have several remarks to raise: — The article concerning local revenues — which are in the form of heavy taxation to the municipal councils and charges for water, electricity and others — amounting to JD 586 million should be reduced in every possible way."

"In return, the government should draft Al Zakat law (alms to the poor) under which only rich people are bound to shoulder the financial burdens instead of the poor. Under the Zakat law, certain requirements are levied on the rich people and differentiate between the rich and poor, for its provisions do not apply on basic commodities needed for the life of the general people."

"Moreover, firm legislation should be issued in order to force the Jordanian tycoons to withdraw their deposits from foreign banks. Those funds should first be

checked out on their legality, subject to Al Zakat law, and then invested in national development projects."

"The government should also refrain from the policy of securing loans at high interest rates since the accumulated interest rates are registered to have exceeded JD 63 million, an extra payment which represents a further burden on the government."

"The government is also requested to take steps aimed at lifting financial pressure from the unemployed and low-income workers. This could be achieved through a planned programme including a study to improve the situation of public servants in general and the teachers in particular, reducing the prices of fuel in accordance with the international drop in oil prices and confining the role of the Ministry of Supply to only trading with government-subsidised commodities, leaving transactions of other goods to the private sector."

"The government should forbid depositing funds abroad and curtail the importation of luxuries. — Irbid governorate has outstanding problems which need to be solved. The problems include treating salination in the governorate's underground water and setting up a college for Shari'a at Yarmouk University."

"Expediting the implementation of a four-lane Amman-Irbid road and setting up new capital projects in the northern parts with a view to absorb part of the unemployed are also demands put to the government."

"On the major sectors of the economy, the budget speech referred to great economic achievements that are worthy of praise, when in fact the government was biased towards the rich and the big industrialists and farmers at the expense of the poor and the public at large."

"Dividing Yarmouk University into two and the cosmetic changes at Mu'ta University have not done much to improve the lot of students going or aspiring to go to institutions of higher education in the country: fees are still high, high grades are still required, and the opportunities are too few. The whole system of admission into universities needs to be overhauled."

"In the health sector, the budget speech referred to building several new hospitals. But this remained only talk as in earlier speeches. So was the case of the new law of the medical council and the medical insurance programme. What is needed instead of the medical insurance programme is a comprehensive health insurance programme for all citizens."

"The budget speech referred to the blessing of security and stability that we enjoy. I do not understand how this can be the case when we still have the defence and martial laws, and when the constitution has been suspended for two decades now. What security and stability are we talking about when the land is either occupied or threatened, and when the citizen is not enjoying his full rights to freedom and thought? Talk about security and stability would have been possible if the speech had tackled the issues of lifting the martial law and giving citizens their full rights to expression and political organisation."

"For the budget to have credibility, it has to be taken seriously and followed to the letter. We do not oppose lighting up streets, or shouldering the cost of failure at Abu Neir (housing estate) or exempting part of hotel profits from taxes, but all these steps have to be taken in conformity with the budget allocations as approved by Parliament, otherwise the legislative branch would lose its control over public money."

"Here, we propose that there be no more annexes to the budget after the fiscal year ends, and that there be no more loans to finance projects not included in the budget."

"It is non-conformity with the budget that makes actual figures not correspond with budget figures. For example the total loans and deficit in the 1986 budget were JD 90 million and JD 37 million respectively; this makes the total estimated deficit JD 135 million, which would have to be covered by commercial and

development loans; so what would in effect happen? — The loans in the first section of the budget totalled JD 157 million and the loans in the second section amounted to JD 90 million. Therefore the government would have borrowed JD 247 million or three times as much of what the budget states. In addition, the JD 65 million deficit would bring the overall deficit in the current 1986 deficit to about JD 312 million."

"In other words, 31 per cent of the government's finances are loans. Is this acceptable to a responsible government which knows the consequences of getting entangled in loans either local or foreign? How and when will the treasury repay the loans? — Subsidary oil products were allocated JD 5 million in the budget, but the amount was taken as revenue totalling JD 90 million as savings and government revenue amounted to JD 95 million which should cover the deficit and avoid more borrowing."

"What the government did was to expand spending unreasonably and to widen the total deficit to JD 312 million. What would have happened without energy savings? Could the total deficit have gone as high as JD 400 million? What financial policy allows expanding spending to a degree of posting such a high deficit and can this situation continue for long?"

"What is the point in saying that the deficit for 1987 is JD 39 million and how can we believe this figure in the light of what happened for the 1986 budget? What are the new policies and the changes from last year (1986)? Under this circumstances we can't expect but more borrowing, higher deficit, accumulative deficits and increased debt servicing above the so-called normal level if we haven't exceeded that already."

"The first section of the budget projects higher revenue in 1987 by 21 per cent compared to the 1986 figure. Moreover spending under the first section is projected to be less by four per cent. Who believes these statements? — Income tax was down by 25 per cent or more, customs revenue fell by nine per cent and will be declining further if imports fall; some local revenues declined, oil price is expected to rise thus cutting the income from oil products, Arab aid is decreasing and the recession is spreading throughout economic sectors... so how can revenues be so highly projected?"

"Will there be new taxes? Will there be inflation? Is there a fascinating economic growth? The answer to all these questions is no. So how come the revenues were so grossly exaggerated to allow for more huge spending which, we know beforehand, will be surpassed by the government."

"I challenge the government, represented by the prime minister, to raise revenues by 21 per cent and lower spending by four per cent. I am sure that the opposite will occur."

"If it had not been for the savings from oil prices, the 1986 budget figures would have been a true mediocrity and the citizens would have had to pay the cost of inefficiencies, financial waste and the incapability of collecting treasury dues."

"What will happen in 1987 to raise revenues and reduce spending and why the budget speech does not say what could be believed?"

"The capital expenditure in the second section of the budget include, for the first time, an amount of JD 25 million to be spent on construction of various buildings but the amount is only to be disbursed by a decision of the Council of Ministers."

"We do not object to such construction projects, defined only as schools, health centres and hospitals, but we want specific projects with a cost for each because that is the way it should be unless the government is saving the disclosure of details of these projects as surprises for some happy occasions."

"We are here to debate budget projects according to priorities, so how can we do that if the projects are not known to us but rather left to a future decision belonging to another body beyond our reach in Parliament?"

"The Lower House have previously recommended that all budgets of public companies should all be incorporated in the general budget but the government did not abide by those decisions and the Budget Department distributed a special booklet for various independent government institutions showing independent financial positions for each."

"We could notice that these institutions were truly independent and far away from legislators' control from the spending point of view, but the fact that these institutions depend mostly on government financial backing makes these institutions not as independent as they may seem. Therefore, these institutions should either be truly independent and not dependent on treasury funds or be subject to the same budget criteria like other

government departments."

"Though worthless, the special booklet for independent institutions did not include the budget for the Royal Jordanian Airline, despite the fact that its operations alone equals the total budgets of all other institutions together."

"We do not know why the airline's budget was not included. Is the reason for this to cover up losses or is it that the corporation is truly managerially independent from the government?"

"Along the same lines, the government is still ignoring the resolutions of the Lower House which state that non-recurring spending for the Armed Forces should be included in the treasury and not in a special fund to avoid the same question again... what is the wisdom behind this?"

"Based on all the aforementioned, I see the budget in its present form as lacking the minimal principles of planning and the financial policies in general and therefore I oppose the draft budget and request that it be turned back to the government."

"We realise, while debating the government's budget, that the mere figures are not indicative of real progress unless the numbers are linked to practical implementation to show how Jordan is advancing towards achieving its goals and ambitions."

"We noted that the budget was based on the wise foundations laid down by His Majesty King Hussein and adopted by the government to reflect His Majesty's keenness to strengthen the past achievements and to preserve the security and to bring higher prosperity to the Jordanian people."

"The citizen is the essence of production and the real capital in Jordan and it is imperative that the citizen should be a full active partner in what the country is undertaking in administrative development and economic reactivation. Jordan cannot achieve much if citizens are not actively involved and not vigorously participating in the process for progress."

"In this regard, the following important points in the budget should be highlighted. Unemployment: — It was announced in the budget speech that unemployment has become more evident and it was estimated at eight per cent of the workforce."

"Unemployment is not only among university and community college graduates and among engineers and medical doctors but it is getting more widespread among many other sectors and professions. As a result, it is high time to take active measures to limit entry permits to foreign labourers especially that there are about 210,000 non-Jordanians working in the country representing more than 32 per cent of the workforce."

"We are witnessing some crimes that were unheard of before. Statistics by the Public Security Department point to 151 crimes committed by non-Jordanians during the month of October 1986. The number represents an increase of 42 crimes over the figure from October 1985 and it is shocking that 55 per cent of the crimes were committed in Amman."

"We appreciate the capabilities and alertness of the police force to subdue foreign criminal acts but is equally important that the private sector should also help by not relying on government measures to combat foreign employment but rather should give priority to Jordanian labour."

"We are confidently following up on the government's initiative to develop the occupied territories in accordance with the request of Parliament."

"We call on all Arabs to support the development plan which Jordan is adopting to minimise the sufferings of our people under occupation and to supply them with essential services."

"We appreciate the government's allocation of JD 10 million to develop the occupied territories and we hope that more funds would be allocated in the future to preserve the Arab existence in the occupied territories from cracking under the oppression of the Israelis."

"We also appreciate the government's support for various educational and health entities and hope that the support would cover the workers in these sectors beyond 1987."

"We feel obliged to extend our thanks to the prime minister for his initiative in expediting the

release of JD 4 million to much-needed projects in the occupied territories and for all decisions taken by the government for the benefit of engineers and lawyers."

"The Armed Forces, being the shield of the nation and the protector of the country's achievements, was given the anticipated support in order to maintain the high standard it enjoys and to remain the pride of each citizen."

"The government should provide the Armed Forces with all means to maintain its high standard and to raise its number and its equipment. Equally important, the government should give much attention to the People's Army and the Public Security and Civil Defence departments to enable them to achieve our goal of countering all enemies of the Arab Nation."

"It is high time that something positive is to be taken in this regard, not only because it is the right path but because international borrowing has become extremely difficult."

"Foreign debt (instalments and interest) for 1987 exceeds JD 110 million or about 10.8 per cent of total general expenditure. We welcome the government's keenness to control down the foreign debt as expressed in the 1987 budget and we hope that the projections will be translated to real figures."

"In this regard, borrowing should be restricted to projects which are economically feasible and which rely on local raw materials and Jordanian labour to lessen the unemployment problem."

"Expatriates' transfers of hard currencies should be utilised efficiently as it is expected that large sums will be coming in during the next three years as a result of many expatriates returning back to reside in their homeland."

"The government should regard the hard currencies of the expatriates as a valuable asset for years to come when it is expected that expatriates' transfers would diminish."

"The financial sector should be enhanced and given added confidence. The Central Bank of Jordan should also be given more authority to draw up new legislations to supervise and apprehend unlawful acts by banks or moneychangers."

"The willingness to support industries should be reflected in some benefits for the citizens especially in low prices, good quality and higher employment so that any protection given to the industrial sector does not benefit a small group."

"Higher degree of supervision should also be exerted on semi-government institutions which are more or less independent and which account for about 50 per cent of government expenditures."

"We hope that the supervision would be intensified on spending and that efforts are multiplied in collecting revenues which, according to the budget, will grow by 21 per cent for the general revenues and by 13 per cent to local revenues."

"Other Arab countries should also take part in implementing the noble development scheme for the occupied territories in order to help the people living there to consolidate their steadfastness in the face of the Israeli enemy."

"I think the government for its efforts in preparing the draft budget for 1987 and for the House financial committee for preparing its report on the budget."

"I thank all the Arab countries who are extending financial support to Jordan."

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Botham returns strong for cricket test in Australia

CANBERRA (R) — All-rounder Ian Botham, playing for the first time for three weeks, was quickly back to his most robust form with two wickets and a quickfire 43 in England's victory over the Prime Minister's XI here Tuesday.

England won the one-day game at Manuka Oval by four wickets with 14 balls of its 50 overs to spare. It made 241 for six after restricting the Prime Minister's XI to 240 for five.

From an England point of view, the match's chief importance was as a Botham fitness workout after he tore a muscle in his side in the second test in Perth on Dec. 3. He missed the third test in Adelaide and his participation in the fourth

test starting in Melbourne on Friday was in some doubt.

But his 10-over bowling stint, albeit off a shortened approach, and his hard-hit 43 in 52 minutes from 44 balls dispelled English fears that they would have to do without him again.

Prime Minister Bob Hawke won the toss using a coin delivered by a skydiver and his young Australian side batted attractively for its runs. Openers

Glenn Bishop and Mike Veletta put on 109 from the first 23 overs. Veletta going on to make 75.

For England, David Gower's 68 from 67 balls was the most impressive contribution while Botham's was the most significant.

Botham said: "It's been bloody boring the last three weeks. But I feel very good. I've had no reaction to either bowling or batting, although I wasn't at more than 75 per cent pace."

He said he would not be fully fit to bowl in Melbourne but added he would be "a useful first change."

England captain Mike Gatting said: "Botham didn't try to bowl flat out. I hope he will be able to bowl and bat in Melbourne."

With a long tradition of discipline, Arsenal enjoys life as league leader

By Timothy Collings
Reuters

LONDON (R) — Arsenal, the London soccer club with the blue chip reputation of a dependable merchant bank, will celebrate its centenary on Christmas Day on top of the English First Division.

With a five-point lead over its nearest rivals, an unbeaten run of 12 league matches behind it and a proud record of never having been relegated in its long and illustrious history, the players might be pardoned a second helping of plum pudding and an extra swig of brandy to aid digestion.

But forgiveness will not be needed. Complacency is the last human failing to be found amid the shining, evocative marble halls of the club's Highbury Stadium.

Indeed, the notion of an Arsenal player even loosening his tie during the festive season would raise eyebrows among the club's loyal, but long-suffering, followers and almost certainly invite a formal reminder of the club's strict code of conduct.

Brought up to admire the discipline, diligence and traditions created by Herbert Chapman, the manager who lifted the club to

greatness after taking charge in 1925, Arsenal's fans have endured years of taunting of the gunners' starched and stiff-collared style on and off the field.

Even in 1971, when it won the English League and Cup double, its triumph was somewhat watered down in its workmanlike achievement by comparisons with the more expressive and skillful team of local rival Tottenham who had performed the same feat a decade earlier.

This season, however, watching their team climb from mid-table to take a firm grip at the top with a steadily increasing flow of goals and convincing victories, the fans have enjoyed hearing the "lucky" and "boring" taunts, so frequently used in the past, stick in the critics' throats.

Last Saturday, Arsenal dug itself in at the summit with a 3-0 victory over Luton Town, one of the cluster of clubs fighting to stay within touching distance of the leader.

Though the performance was not one to move neutrals to ecstasy, it was sufficiently convincing to prove that the gunners' title-challenging

credentials are capable of standing up to most tests.

Luton, a modest but well-organised team, defended stubbornly for 70 minutes before Arsenal's patience was rewarded with goals from Niall Quinn, Tony Adams and Martin Hayes, three relatively unknown youngsters who have established themselves in the team moulded this season by new manager George Graham.

Graham, himself a member of the 1971 double-winning team, was moved to remark afterwards: "I played in many games like that when we won the championship. You have to keep your patience and still believe in what you are trying to do."

Graham, a dry-witted Scot with no time for fools, and Arsenal, who has not won a major honour since winning the Football Association (F.A.) Cup in 1979, clearly have abundant patience.

Earlier in the season, some of Arsenal's more vociferous fans were calling for Graham to use the club cheque-book to strengthen the team's attack. He declined and instead persevered with a striking trio of Quinn, Hayes and Perry Groves.

Charlie Nicholas, the Scottish World Cup striker, lost his place through injury and has been unable to reclaim it since recovering as the tall, gangling Quinn, intelligent and industrious Hayes and toiling provider Groves were welded into an effective unit.

In its last five league games, Arsenal has scored 14 goals, conceded two and collected 13 points. Nicholas, his hair trimmed and shirt tucked into his shorts since Graham's arrival, still waits on the substitutes' bench.

Chapman created a world-famous club by sticking to a counter-attacking game which revolved around the skills and tactical acumen of Charlie Buchan, David Jack and Alex James and which first spawned cries of "lucky Arsenal."

Plan to allow tennis pros in Olympics gets boost

LONDON (AP) — A plan to allow the world's top professional tennis players to compete in the 1988 Olympics received a major boost Tuesday from the International Tennis Federation and Soviet sports officials.

The ITF said it would ask the International Olympic Committee "on an experimental basis" to open tennis in the Seoul Games "to all players without discrimination."

The plan must be approved by the IOC before taking effect. "We hope that the participation of the best players in the world, both men and women, in the biggest festival of sport in the world will encourage millions of new people to take up the game," the ITF statement said.

After returning to the games as an exhibition sport in 1984, tennis will be a medal sport in '88.

While professionals would be allowed to compete, the ITF said they would have to undergo drug tests, suspend endorsement contracts that require them to wear manufacturers' logos on uniforms and rackets, and "not accept any form of financial reward whatsoever" for their participation in the games.

The men's Davis Cup and the women's Federation Cup, the main international team events in tennis, will be used as the basis of picking the Olympic field, with a worldwide qualifying programme to complete the draws, the federation said.

Each men's and women's team would consist of no more than three singles players and one doubles team, the ITF said.

Such a proposal for tennis is very similar to one put on hold last October at the IOC's 91st session in Lausanne, Switzerland, where the committee agreed to allow virtually every other sports federation to determine eligibility for its Olympic athletes.

But while the IOC plan was opposed by Moscow, the ITF proposal appeared to have gained Soviet approval.

The ITF announcement mentioned that Federation President Philippe Chatrier, a longtime advocate of open

Olympics, had met recently in Moscow with Marat Gramov, the Soviet sports minister and National Olympic Committee president.

Asked if this meant that Gramov had raised no major objections to the ITF plan when it was presented by Chatrier, ITF General Secretary Shirley Woodhead replied: "Yes, that's a good way to put it."

Moscow and its Eastern Bloc allies have been at the centre of opposition to opening the games to professionals. Their stance weakened in October, '86, when all of the top Western players are pros and the technically amateur Soviets are beginning to make inroads — was one sport on which they stood firm.

The proposal will be submitted to the IOC's eligibility commission in February and — if the commission approves — to the full IOC at its 92nd session in Istanbul, Turkey, next May, the ITF said.

Phone calls to Willi Daume, an IOC member from West Germany and chairman of the eligibility commission, were not answered. Michele Verdier, the IOC spokesman in Lausanne, Switzerland, was on vacation and an operator at the committee's headquarters said no one else was available to answer questions.

The ITF said that, if its plan is adopted by the IOC, qualifying tournaments would be held in Europe, the Americas, Africa, Asia and Oceania to pick half of the men's and women's fields. The other half would automatically be eligible for Seoul based on their performance in Davis and Federation Cup events, Woodhead said.

If a player chooses not to play on his or her nation's cup teams, as Lendl has done this year for Czechoslovakia, that would not bar that athlete from the Olympics, Woodhead said.

"Anyone could go through a qualifying tournament, provided they are nominated by their NOC (National Olympic Committee)," she said. "It's the NOCs who will nominate the players."

Belgian squash tourney refuses appearance fee for Jahangir

BRUSSELS (R) — Jahangir Khan of Pakistan, five times world squash champion, has been refused a \$15,000 appearance fee for his participation in the 1987 World Open Squash Tournament in Antwerp after organisers refused to pay an appearance fee of \$15,000.

Tournament organiser Jef Hagedoren said Tuesday that following the refusal Ron Morton, Jahangir's manager, had reduced the demand to \$5,000, but this was also rejected out of hand.

The incident has brought into the open the shadowy practice of appearance handouts to star players and led to a declaration of support for the Belgian organisers from the International Squash

Players Association (ISPA). "We support Hagedoren in his refusal to pay appearance fees," ISPA Executive Director Roger Eady said.

"We know these practices have been going on for some time, but this is the first time an organiser gives us hard proof and even makes it available to the press," he added that Jahangir was the only player who had asked for appearance money.

"This is against the interest of the other players. It has done a lot of damage to other sports, and particularly to tennis," Eady said.

Although Jahangir will be absent, the organisers still boast the participation of world champion Ross Norman of New Zealand, who beat the Pakistani in last month's World Open Championship final in Toulouse, France, and is currently top of the computer rankings.

Top seed wins in Orange Bowl tennis

MIAMI BEACH, Florida (AP) — Top-seeded Javier Sanchez of Spain, the number one junior player in the world, defeated Harry Anderson of South Africa, 6-0, 6-3, Monday in first round action of the boys 18 division at the 40th annual Orange Bowl Tennis Championships.

Second-seeded Tomas Carbonell of Spain defeated unseeded Salvador Bolanos of El Salvador, 6-0, 6-1, while third-seeded Omar Camporese of Italy defeated unseeded Tancerto Castellanos of the Dominican Republic, 6-0, 6-0.

In another match, fourth-seeded Al Parker of the United States beat unseeded Wendell McCombie of Trinidad, 6-0, 6-0.

The girls 18 division play starts Tuesday.

In second round play of the boys 16 division, top-seeded Andrey Cherkasov of the Soviet Union defeated Tamer Hegazi of Egypt, 6-0, 6-1.

In the girls 16 division, top-seeded Alexia Dechaume of France defeated unseeded Deborah Edelmann of the United States, 6-1, 6-1.

New England clinches berth

MIAMI (AP) — Steve Grogan, who replaced the injured Tony Eason, threw a 31-yard touchdown pass to Stanley Morgan with 44 seconds remaining Monday night to give New England a 34-27 National Football League victory over Miami.

The win put the Patriots into the NFL playoffs and knocked Cincinnati out.

It was the second touchdown pass of the game for Grogan, who also ran for a touchdown in what developed into a shootout with Miami's Dan Marino. Marino had three touchdown passes and set NFL records for pass completions and attempts in a season.

The victory by the Patriots, 11-5, gives them the AFC East title and means the Kansas City Chiefs will play the New York Jets at Giants Stadium in the AFC wildcard game next Sunday.

Sydney yacht goes to court

FREMANTLE, Australia (R) — Backers of the Sydney boat Steak 'n' Kidney, unhappy about the scoring system for the America's Cup semifinals, took their complaint to the Western Australia supreme court Tuesday.

The Steak 'n' Kidney Syndicate filed a suit against the organising Royal Perth Yacht Club seeking an interpretation of the format to be used for the defender semifinals starting on Dec. 27.

After a short hearing the case was adjourned until Jan. 6, a delay which means Steak 'n' Kidney will race right through the semifinals in the hope of securing a favourable ruling.

Under the present format, Steak 'n' Kidney faces little prospect of surviving the semifinals because points acquired in earlier racing will be carried forward.

Cash punches cameraman after Davis Cup practice

MELBOURNE, Australia (R) — A television cameraman said Tuesday Australia's top tennis player Pat Cash assaulted him at the end of a stormy practice session for the Davis Cup final against Sweden.

Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) cameraman Mike Patterson, 42, said Cash punched him in the right eye while he was filming him near the dressing rooms.

A second cameraman, from Channel 10, said Cash, who had earlier stormed off court during a match with teammate John Fitzgerald, walked up to him and tried to pull his camera out of his hand.

There was no immediate comment from Cash, but Australia's Davis Cup captain Neale Fraser said he was not surprised the reported incident had taken place.

Fraser said he would be talking to Cash about it Tuesday night.

"It's typical of a highly strung athlete preparing for one of the biggest matches in his life," Fraser said.

"Cash is a perfectionist and he wasn't happy with the way he was playing," Fraser said, referring to his walk off.

"I was expecting something similar to this to happen. It has happened before and it will happen again."

Patterson said that he was about 10 metres from Cash and backed away after the player swore at him. He said Cash followed and threw a punch which hit him in the right eye.

During practice, Fitzgerald took the first set against Cash then produced a string of winners against the young Victorian, who promptly packed up his bag and stalked off.

Cash had broken two racquets during his match with Fitzgerald, part of practice for the final against Sweden that starts Dec. 26.

Fraser said Fitzgerald's form had improved his chances of a singles berth.

"But there is still tomorrow to go and we'll see what happens then," he said.

Knicks end losing streak

NEW YORK (AP) — Patrick Ewing was playing well while the New York Knicks were losing eight consecutive games in the National Basketball Association, so it was no surprise that he played well when the losing streak came to an end.

Ewing, averaging 22.3 points during the Knicks' tailspin, scored 29 Monday night and equalled his season high with 15 rebounds in a

103-99 victory over the San Antonio Spurs.

"I'm happy to be playing better, but it's still no fun unless you win," said Ewing, whose scoring average after his first 12 games this season was 11.0. "I got tired, but when it's close you have to suck it in."

Ewing played 45 minutes for the Knicks, who also broke a six-game home losing streak.

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Pretoria bars 2 groups of U.S. congressmen from January visits

JOHANNESBURG (R) — South Africa has barred two groups of U.S. congressmen who planned to visit the country in January, Foreign Minister Pik Botha said Tuesday.

The U.S. congressmen, including Howard Wolpe, chairman of a House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Subcommittee, planned to make a fact-finding mission next month.

Mr. Botha told state radio only congressmen who did not vote for a tough sanctions package against South Africa in October would be welcome.

"To think that we must welcome here a number of legislators who have just now passed legislation punishing South Africa in the most vindictive way and allow them to... investigate and evaluate the effect of the punishment they meted out to us. That is a bit far-fetched," Mr. Botha said.

Wolpe, saying, "I do not think you will find anywhere in the world a man who is more vicious and vindictive against this country than that particular gentleman."

Asked if the United States could now impose more punitive measures on South Africa, Mr. Botha said: "They were going to do so in our opinion in any case."

He said it was important for the American public to be made aware that Congress' action against South Africa had repercussions for American interests.

"If they start realising that our airspace and our territory is not that accessible to them any more, particularly in the power struggle with the Soviet Union, I do believe it can serve a very good purpose."

he said. Interviewed on state television Monday night, Mr. Botha defended South African forces who abducted five people from Swaziland this month, saying: "We would have taken them even if it had been in London." Two people were killed in the raid.

Speaking on his return from Swaziland where he held talks with Prime Minister Sotji Dlamini, he said neither country could tolerate African National Congress (ANC) guerrillas entering South Africa from Mozambique via Swaziland to kill people.

He said South African forces had "taken" people "personally responsible for the killing of South Africans—and who planned diabolic plans for the rest of the holidays."

Two Swiss citizens were later freed because of South Africa's good relations with the Swiss government, Mr. Botha said.

Pretoria this month imposed press censorship and rounded up opponents to pre-empt an alleged Christmas "terror campaign" by the ANC, which is fighting to topple the white-ruled government.

Commenting on proposed talks between U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz and ANC leader Oliver Tambo in Washington next month, Mr. Botha said he hoped Mr. Shultz made clear the U.S. government would not tolerate ANC violence and would insist the movement break its ties with the South African Communist Party.

Mr. Botha said such a meeting did not necessarily represent a shift in American policy, but he added that it was difficult to keep track of American foreign policy.

Earlier, the South African Broadcasting Corp. reported that the families of 86 black policemen whose homes were burned by radicals in their neighbourhoods had new houses for Christmas outside the townships.

Sri Lanka heads for Christmas ceasefire

COLOMBO (Agencies) — Sri Lanka looked forward to a peaceful Christmas Tuesday after the government and separatist Tamil rebels said they wanted a 24-hour ceasefire as a sign of goodwill.

National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali said Monday night he hoped a "day of non-violence" would be observed on Dec. 25 along the lines of a worldwide truce called by Pope John Paul last month.

Sri Lankan soldiers and Tamil guerrillas, who have been fighting for three years, blamed each other for breaking the Nov. 27 one-day ceasefire.

"Christmas is a day of peace and unity and we must ensure there are no acts of violence," Mr. Athulathmudali told a meeting outside Colombo.

His call was welcomed by the deputy leader of the biggest guerrilla group in the island's northern peninsula.

Kanagaratnam, alias Raheem, told Reuters by telephone that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) "welcome any overtures towards peace."

"But for an effective truce, the military must remain inside their camps on Dec. 25 and stop attacks on civilians and our men," he said.

He said the other rebel groups, also fighting for a separate state for minority Tamils in the island's north and east, were likely to follow the LTTE decision.

Mr. Athulathmudali said a new foundation for peace was laid last week with the simultaneous release of two soldiers held in LTTE captivity and two LTTE men detained in the capital, Colombo.

"It's the first step. And for the second step, let's refrain from fighting for one day at least on Christmas," he said.

A National Security Ministry spokesman said Monday the exchange of prisoners showed that both sides could resolve internal problems without resorting to a third party.

Official sources said the exchange of prisoners was an "eye opener" and prompted new thinking in the government to opt for direct talks with the rebels.

The government last week ended inconclusive talks with special Indian envoys on Sri Lanka's plan to give limited autonomy to Tamils through new provincial councils.

India has been acting as a mediator between Colombo and the rebels.

More than 4,500 people have died in the past three years of fighting.

Meanwhile factional fighting between two major Tamil militant groups left at least 10 people dead near Amparam in eastern Sri Lanka, military officials said Tuesday.

The victims were all members of LTTE killed in an attack Monday by the Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation front, known as the EPRLF, the officials said.

The two militias are among five Tamil groups fighting the government for a separate nation they call "Eelam" in the island's north and east.

Soviet general reveals flaws in article on SDI

LONDON (R) — A Soviet general, in what is believed to be an unprecedented move, wrote a letter to the Times of London in response to an article in the newspaper on President Reagan's "Star Wars" space-based defence plan.

The letter from Maj.-Gen. Rair Simonyan, published in Tuesday's paper, said the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) could become a shield from behind which the U.S. might try to launch a first strike. He added that such a development would increase rather than lower the risk of nuclear conflict.

Spokesmen for both the Times and the British Foreign Office said they could not recall such a letter being sent to the paper before. A Times spokesman said he felt the letter expressed the view of the Soviet government.

The Foreign Office spokesman said the Major-General's letter

"indicates that they (the Soviets) are prepared to use all the means of getting their message across." Written in response to a Dec. 2 article by journalist David Hart, the letter was passed to the Times by the London office of the Novosti Press Agency, Moscow's official overseas news organisation. The Times said it checked that the letter was genuine.

Simonyan gave his address as the Ministry of Defence of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Frunzi Street, Moscow.

In the letter he said: "The flaws in Mr. Hart's arguments underline the point that the only way to peace and stability lies through agreements on cutting and eventually eliminating nuclear weapons here on earth rather than through the development of space shield-swords."

Zia calls Benazir Bhutto intelligent, over-ambitious

LONDON (AP) — Pakistan's President Mohammad Zia ul-Haq described his principal political opponent, Benazir Bhutto, as intelligent but over-ambitious in a television interview shown Monday night.

"I've never met her, but she seems to be an intelligent girl," the president told Britain's Independent Television news.

"She has some potential, not underestimated, and if she adopts a positive approach she can serve the country at some stage. But over-ambition is always bad," the president said.

Asked if he hated Miss Bhutto, whose political campaigning has drawn huge crowds, Gen. Zia replied: "No, I never hate — hate doesn't take you anywhere."

In April, Miss Bhutto returned to Pakistan from exile in Britain to head the Pakistan People's Party (PPP). Her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the party's leader and former prime minister, was executed by Gen. Zia in 1979 after a military coup.

In the recording made in Pakistan last week, Gen. Zia said that Miss Bhutto "has got her own designs and she considers herself an aggrieved party because her father was sent to the gallows. But this is not the way that Pakistan politics is to be run."

The president stated that the people of Pakistan had "rejected" Miss Bhutto, "not me."

Reagan lauds U.N. reforms

WASHINGTON (R) — President Reagan has welcomed promised reforms in the United Nations and pledged that the United States would support the world body if they were faithfully implemented.

The American ambassador to the United Nations, Vernon Walters, bolstered by the promised changes, particularly in the U.N. budget, said last week he would recommend Congress restore cuts in its contribution to the organisation.

"With the support of Congress, my administration has long advocated such reforms, so we are very pleased that these measures have finally been adopted," Mr. Reagan said in a written statement released by the White House.

He said: "The intelligence she has put to use for the better service of the country, but in a very positive manner."

Asked if Miss Bhutto's political ambition might be a dangerous threat to his rule, Gen. Zia said: "Not quite. She is leading a political party which has a good potential. (It) is one that must not be underestimated."

"Therefore my advice to the party in power is, strengthen yourself. By 1990, all the political parties will fight for power, so they should not underestimate their opponents."

Asked about speculation that the Soviet Union would like to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan after seven years fighting anti-Communist guerrillas there, Gen. Zia said he hoped for fresh diplomatic initiatives after the failure of previous efforts, mainly in Geneva.

Because Pakistan is host to three million Afghan refugees from the fighting, "we would be much better off" if the Soviet Union withdrew because the refugees would go home, he said.

Gen. Zia said that for the Soviet Union to agree to withdraw, Afghanistan would have to be non-aligned and independent, "and not anti-Soviet... America will tolerate a hostile Cuba but the Soviet Union will not tolerate a hostile Afghanistan," the president said.

Statue of Samantha Smith unveiled

AUGUSTA, Maine (AP) — A statue of Samantha Smith, the schoolgirl who became a symbol of peace between the United States and the Soviet Union, was unveiled in a ceremony Monday.

her mother and former schoolmates watched. "It's an incredible honour," said Jane Smith, Samantha's mother, who stood next to Maine Governor Joseph E. Brennan. "And I believe the statue will help remind all people, especially children, that ordinary people can make a difference."

The statue, located in front of the State Cultural Building, depicts Samantha releasing a dove, with a bear cub at her side. Samantha was 13 when she died last year in a plane crash. "She appeared to us as a shooting star — or more fitting to this season, as a Christmas star in the night, guiding the way for the three wise men," said Brennan. "Samantha will never, never be forgotten." Samantha, who lived in Manchester, Maine, gained international attention in December 1982 when she wrote a letter to Yuri Andropov, the Soviet leader at the time, expressing her fears about nuclear war.

Cyprus police kill masked gunman

NICOSIA (R) — Cypriot police killed a gunman during an armed robbery attempt, Cyprus radio has reported. It quoted witnesses as saying three masked men wearing military-style clothing and carrying automatic weapons entered a football club just before dawn and took an estimated \$30,000 from a gambling room. One man, as yet unidentified, was killed in an exchange of fire with police as the gang tried to escape. The other two men were arrested, the radio said.

Goebbels praised in teachers' handbook

BERLIN (AP) — A school teachers' handbook praises Joseph Goebbels, Germany's Nazi-era propaganda minister, for his "courageous endurance" in the face of wartime allied bombing, an opposition politician said Monday. Erhart Koerting, Social Democratic Party leader in the West Berlin district of Charlottenburg, called the Goebbels passage "embarrassing" and demanded its removal. Guenther Spanier, a district school board spokesman, confirmed such a Goebbels passage appeared in the first 10,000 copies of an instructional handbook that is not available to pupils. "To avoid future misunderstanding, the sentence will be removed in the second edition of 5,000 issues," Spanier told the Associated Press in response to a telephone inquiry. The disputed passage read: "Goebbels was esteemed and respected for his courageous endurance," a reference to the Nazi propaganda chief's campaign to boost the morale of Berlin's population as allied bombing raids worsened. "I don't find it sensible that one should describe as 'courageous' (a man) who was partly responsible for the mass murder and total war" wrought by the Nazi regime, Koerting said.

Pilots often sleep while flying

BOSTON (AP) — Commercial airline pilots often fight intense drowsiness and sometimes even fall asleep while flying planes on long overnight trips, a researcher says. Occasionally, everyone in the cockpit nods off at the same time while the plane flies on automatic pilot, he said. "Planes have been known to cruise past their destinations as the pilots and navigator snooze. When you are in the cabin and your head is rolling over and you can't stay awake, just remember that they're up front is human, too," said Dr. Martin C. Moore-Edwards of Harvard Medical School. Dr. Moore-Edwards, an expert on work-sleeping and sleep, based his conclusions on a study conducted for an airline, which he declined to identify, as well as on interviews with cockpit crews. He blames the problem on boredom and fatigue, saying that some pilots work 16 hours without time for their bodies to adjust. "We've known for a long time that pilots get drowsy on long flights. It's inevitable," said Dr. John K. Lander, a psychologist on the National Transportation Safety Board. "The difficulty is ever trying that drowsiness to any performance problems in safety. We know that, and we're working on it."

Shanghai demonstrations continue for 5th day

SHANGHAI, China (AP) — Students marched Tuesday toward Shanghai City Hall after officials refused to meet with leaders of pro-democracy rallies that have brought thousands of people into the streets of China's largest city.

Police followed the students during the fifth straight day of demonstrations as they walked from Tongji University carrying banners that read, "tell the truth," "implement democracy," "protect human rights," and

"down with bureaucracy." Some students also carried banners saying "Xiaoping, where are you?" and "Hello, Xiaoping," in reference to China's top leader Deng Xiaoping, who has initiated reforms that involve a move toward more democratic policies.

Some students have said the demonstrations were aimed at showing support for the political reforms.

Students said the Graduate Student Committee of Tongji University had wanted to meet

with city officials before 0700 GMT Tuesday. The students said they decided to march to City Hall because officials failed to reply.

There also were unconfirmed reports of another march near City Hall Tuesday morning.

The government on Monday broadcast warnings through loudspeakers in Shanghai's People's Square and posted notices telling students that further public disruptions would not be tolerated and police approval was needed for gatherings.

Students said three of their leaders seeking permission to demonstrate went to the Shanghai

Public Security Bureau Monday night after the notices were posted. They said their request was turned down because police decided they had not provided enough information about their plans.

An official at the Shanghai City Foreign Affairs Office, who refused to be named, said he had heard that students were marching Tuesday, but could not confirm or deny whether they had demanded to meet with city officials or had been denied permission to demonstrate.

There also were unconfirmed reports that some students met with city officials Monday night.

U.S. spy team originally planned by Pentagon — Hall

MANAGUA (R) — Self-confessed American spy Sam Hall has said his intelligence-gathering mission in Nicaragua originated from an operation initially conceived two years ago by the U.S. Defence Department.

Hall, who was detained on Dec. 12 outside the Punta Huete Airbase north of Managua, told reporters here the plan to recruit an "American foreign legion" of spies and counter-terrorists was dropped by the U.S. government because it was too expensive.

It was picked up by private backers, he said, adding that he knew his contacts only by the codenames Tinker, Evers and Chance — all of whom he said were famous baseball players.

"I am not working for the U.S. government that I know of," he said. "I am working for an independent group in America and my sole purpose is to come here to find information only."

The operation, which Hall also described as the Phoenix Battalion, was to be based in the Middle East with forays around the world. It would have employed 540 men.

Hall, 49, of Dayton, Ohio,

looked nervous when he was presented to reporters Monday. His comments only gave a patchy picture of events.

Hall, brother of a U.S. congressman, is the second U.S. citizen captured in Nicaragua in recent months in connection with the war between the leftist Sandinista government and U.S.-backed rebels.

The other American, Eugene Hasenfus, was pardoned and sent home last week after serving about a month of a 30-year jail sentence imposed for gunrunning to the rebels.

Hall is due to stand trial before a People's Tribunal, a special political court for trying war-related crimes like the one which convicted Hasenfus.

"In 1984, in November, I think about the 28th, I was invited to the Pentagon for a meeting," Hall said. "A group was to be formed, and I was to lead that as an independent... they called it the American Foreign Legion." He was also sent to the headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in Langley, Virginia.

The project was shelved after six weeks because of the cost, which would have about \$15 million.

He said he was later contacted and asked to resurrect the scheme for private backers.

Sakharov, in Moscow, urges release of prisoners

MOSCOW (R) — Dissident leader and physicist Andrei Sakharov returned to Moscow Tuesday after seven years in internal exile and called for the release of all Soviet political prisoners.

Surrounded by dozens of foreign reporters and television cameramen at the capital's Yaroslavl Station, he also called on the Soviet government to take "decisive measures to end the tragedy" in Afghanistan.

Looking tired and worn, the 65-year-old Nobel Peace laureate said he had told Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in a telephone conversation last week that all "prisoners of conscience" should be released.

Dr. Sakharov arrived with his wife Yelena Bonner by overnight train from Gorky, some 400 kilometres east of Moscow, where he spent his exile.

He said he was "very happy indeed" to be back in the capital. But Dr. Sakharov said his happiness was overshadowed by the death in a labour camp last month of another prominent dissident, Anatoly Marchenko.

Dr. Sakharov said he had mentioned Marchenko's case to Mr. Gorbachev in their telephone talk.

He said he had "feelings of joy, feelings of excitement" at his liberation, announced to him by the Soviet leader in person when he called him in Gorky at 3 p.m. last Tuesday.

But these feelings were combined "with feelings that everything in the world is still very tragic," said Dr. Sakharov. "The fate of my friends is very

tragic, my friends who are in labour camps of jails.

"I cannot for a moment free myself from horror at the martyr-like death of my friend Anatoly Marchenko in the struggle against injustice."

Dr. Sakharov added: "I hope that my liberation will facilitate a solution to this question, the question of prisoners of conscience."

The academician, a key member of the team that developed the Soviet hydrogen bomb during the late 1940s and early 1950s, doggedly answered questions as friends moved him from the train some 300 metres to a waiting car.

One of the friends angrily asked reporters to stop asking questions and let Dr. Sakharov go to the car, a small ochre yellow Moskvich Saloon parked in front of the Yaroslavl Station.

"He is tired, let him go home," said the friend, an elderly man in spectacles who refused to identify himself.

Dr. Sakharov added: "Yes, I am really tired."

"I am not good at giving press conferences, I'm not an eloquent person," he said, blinking in the glare of the television lights. "And I'm not used to crowds like this and noise."

Dozens of curious Russians including Soviet army soldiers in uniform were attracted by the lights of the foreign television crews, joined in the crowd, asking who was arriving.

Some said they had not heard of Dr. Sakharov, but many others pushed deeper into the throng around him. "Sakharov, back

from exile?" said one middle-aged man. "I really must see him."

Just before climbing into the car to join his waiting wife, who had hurried on ahead, Dr. Sakharov looked around at the crowd and declared: "I have never seen anything like this."

Dr. Sakharov, who during the 1950s won many top state awards for his scientific work, said he would be resting a little at the Moscow apartment where he and his wife lived before their exile.

But later Tuesday, he added, he intended to go to the Physics Institute of the Academy of Sciences, where he previously worked, to attend a seminar.

"I'm working on space problems and problems of elementary particles. I hope very much now that I'm back to return to problems of controlled reaction," he said.

Dr. Sakharov thanked fellow scientists, his family and world opinion for working for the release of himself and his wife from internal exile.

"This became possible thanks to such great international protection. All these seven years scientists, statesmen and public figures, and simply friends, have defended me."

"My children have defended me. And finally my wife has defended me," said the 65-year-old 1975 Nobel Peace laureate.

Dr. Sakharov spent some 40 minutes with reporters in the early morning winter cold, while Bonner, who has a heart condition, went ahead to rest in a car in which two friends later

drove them to their apartment in the capital.

Questioned on his health, Dr. Sakharov replied: "Of course I'm not a healthy man, but in comparison with my wife..."

He added that his own heart condition had improved slightly.

Asked if he would seek a discussion with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, he said: "I want to have a rest and then get on with my scientific work before I seek any such meetings."

Speaking of his conversation with Mr. Gorbachev, Dr. Sakharov said: "He phoned completely unexpectedly. He said, 'you can return to Moscow, and Bonner too.'"

Bonner, who was also reprieved from a five-year term of internal exile to which she was sentenced in August 1984 for anti-Soviet activities, walked on ahead.

"It is his day, not mine," she told reporters.

Dr. Sakharov has standing invitations to travel to a number of Western countries but has indicated that he would prefer to continue to live and work in his homeland.

Mr. Gorbachev has previously said Dr. Sakharov cannot leave the Soviet Union because his scientific work made him privy to state secrets.

Dr. Sakharov, questioned on the Soviet role in Afghanistan, said: "I consider this to be the most painful point of our foreign policy and I hope that more decisive measures will be taken in this area than are being taken at present."

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